UNDER THE YOKE

O'SULLIVAN

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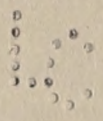
UNDER THE YOKE

A Book with a Purpose

By

F. DALTON O'SULLIVAN

Author of *The American Merchant, Fighters Behind the Lines, The Primrose Path, Enemies of the Underworld,* (Detective), *Applied Psychology and Its Relation to Crime,* etc.



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PREFACE

This volume though not easy to describe is not difficult to appreciate. It contains a series of chapters, giving the brightest side of an enlightened age in the Business, Social, and Political World.

As an American business novel it deals with the classes as well as the masses. Perhaps you shall hear a woman's laugh; it may be the melody of her song; and you may catch the whisper of a good man's prayer, or the yelp of trust-makers that clang with the babble of thousands who move, work, pray, struggle, live and die on foreign shores.

Much of my story material is business. You who comprehend the enormous trend of trade, political, domestic and foreign, will recognize the steel framework of reality which supports every statement. I found them here in America. I dare say you have found them too, and also noted the undercurrent of disapproval and discontent that wheel-locks our ideals of business progress. Injurious competition is a natural business foe. But there are bitter enemies to cause many a reproach and failure, while they lurk near with their danger and calamity, hanging on with steel tenacity and fighting us day and night!

John Coleen is the leading character. Being an editor, author and something of a public speaker, his ideas are his ideals and decidedly distinctive. All difficulties in business are met with smiling front and invincible determination. I believe no man of ability will read the life of this man without recognizing something of his own character, especially that driving force that manifests itself when a man is determined to succeed against organized forces which down the majority, every opposing force that the old world offers. I have portrayed him just as I found him; as I knew him. His experiences are every man's experiences, though probably

not shaped in the same mould. I would not call him a hero but a fighter. Hating the idle subterfuge in business and despising the sluggish determination of men in power to fight a recognized enemy, to destroy a lurking evil, Coleen fights single-handed for a time. It was not an easy task to convince even the most intelligent business men that he was pointing out to them the Evil all men must fight and conquer or forever forsake the ideals of legitimate industry.

His exploits are not tedious and I think at times they are enlivening; for he has a boyish nature, with plenty of the college boy's enthusiasm to win in a battle, if only that of a passing game. He found men who thought they were eternally beaten in the game of business. He shows them the grip of determination and certainty. He knows of cunning, deceit, trickery, and all familiar games of chance which trip the average business man when he least expects them. His knowledge of the conspirators' plots against a nation's welfare is as interesting as it is true and novel. While touching all themes in lighter vein, still John Coleen knew when to call a halt; for then it was that he put his finger on the vital spot which some men would innocently overlook.

As this is his life story it has its human interest, love, pathos and some mirth. Human characteristics, daintily feminine and fascinating, are seen peering from one character and another.

There are different phases of love in his life, some pure in spirit while others border on the elements that make for countless vicissitudes in any life. It is the natural unfolding of an ordinary man's love affairs (or any man's for that matter), even to bordering on the sentimental and the dangerous. I dealt frankly with his love affairs, not as an example; but because they are a part of the structural story and portray a phase in his nature which is admirable even in its weakness. Noble men have loved deeply and well, probably at the wrong time, especially at a time when an overmastering love emotion cajoled them at a dull or lonely

moment to help drive Care away. Such love however, has been known to depart like celestial ether in warm sunshine.

However you wish to judge his sentimental life, we leave you to be your own judge. As a man I knew him more intimately as a fighter in business. He was analytical and the cleverest interpreter of trickery that I have ever known.

Throughout the entire narrative I have made one supreme effort, to portray his American individuality as it is evidenced today in one of the most characteristic features in our whole business plan. He was the incessant agitator of "United Brotherhood" and no man worked harder or with less hope for a time of accomplishing anything in the spirit of man's humanity to man, than did John Coleen.

Today there is not a business enterprise in industrial America that is not forging ahead to bring about a spirit of loyalty among its workers. The profit-sharing plan with its sense of fairness was one factor of his work. You know the result as it is found to-day.

Garthage was but a mining town when John Coleen went there to make his home. He found it in the usual atmosphere of toil and turmoil, strikes, dissention, slavery, and everything that meant loss, destruction, disease and death. In the little town he meets his best friend, a Polish priest. There is no religious bond between the two men. Their friendship however is ideal, for Coleen's coming was at a time when the foreign element came with its feeling of hope, anxiety and fear that pervades the immigrants as they approach America, the land of their dreams—and shattered hopes.

Father Jarenski, the priest, is an old-fashioned father of the world at large. He was too old to be of great active service; yet he is, if I must confess the truth, the golden clasp that makes it worth while to use that clasp to hold these pages together. A good man, a friend, serious yet humorous, there is something tender in making the friendship of the fine old gentleman, though you meet him only as a character in a book. He

was fond of John Coleen. He imbibed much from the younger man's youth and enthusiasm, and it was he who helped John Coleen to begin at the lowly foothills in the mining town of Garthage and it was the priest's nobility of purpose that assisted him to reach the summit of their combined desires.

You say, "Then this is a book with a purpose?" I answer you honestly. It is! Were it lacking in something helpful, I have written it in vain. It was to help, to inspire, to guide, that I wrote it at all. It has a solemn message. But I prefer that you find it for yourself.

FRANK DALTON O'SULLIVAN.

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CHAPTER I.

OLD WORK IN A NEW FIELD

AFTERNOON drowsiness settled over the mining valley where once in a while a breeze from the dank woods rising majestically to the north and south of Garthage, sent its promise of Spring to those who thought of the vernal season. Already the dark green foliage reminded one of a flower calyx,—but holding no beautiful flower to its bruised heart.

John Coleen looked from his office window. At first he saw only the dirty red mining houses, squatting in yards of cinder or beaten clay. True, there were some finer dwellings at a distance and the business houses, wall to wall, were modern, for the mining town was young. Shining railroad steel, burnished to a whitish outline, marked the veining of the principal industrial output. Long rows of empty coal cars stood on a siding, ready to be drawn up the high tipple to the mouth of the mine. This tipple looked like the backbone of some huge monster, and maybe it was some unknown monster that stood at the yawning mouth of the great mine. Death came so often that one could imagine some unknown or unseen foe awaiting its victim. Even the turbulent little creek which tumbled and babbled at the foot of the hill was filled with a redlike fluid, only the effects of the oxide from the mines, yet it seemed that something, maybe that foe, had severed some of the earth's great arteries, for the bloodlike stain crept day and night down the bruised hillside and flowed its way to the clearer water of the Ohio River, lower in the valley.

Coleen was a newspaper man, fresh from the West. His optimistic outlook from his open office window was enigmatical at the time; but he had no intention of permitting the somewhat dismal scene to dampen his enthusiasm. He mused as he looked from hilltop to valley, from valley to the blue dome above all. Thinking came lightly and pleasantly to him. After all a newspaper man lives most of his life in happy contemplation when not in realization. He felt again the tug of that ambition which brought him to Garthage, urged him to buy the metal furniture of a wornout printing office, left by a much disgusted young job printer who was only too glad to get away. Coleen did not feel that he was going to follow a blind lead if he established himself in the office for a purpose. It was not promising to an average newspaper man who did not mean to branch out. He would not fail at the start. His experience as a reporter, city editor, general manager, set his thoughts to thinking in slugs, bases, rules and space. Unmindful of possible obstacles, for he expected them, he set out to go to the station. The train was due at six o'clock and he expected his wife and little son on the train.

As Coleen walked over to the station, not far distant from his office, he felt for the first time that the town was disgustingly dirty, at least the business section. It seemed dead at that hour and only the shifting of cars and the shriek of an engine broke the silence. He passed a Catholic church. He looked at the gilded cross poised aloft above many saloons which did a thriving business within its very shadow! It was a tall, ugly building which crouched against a hillside, its rear seemingly imbedded in the hill as if that part was supported by old Mother Earth. A pyramid of steps showed a wide door in the very middle of the building at their apex. One

must climb these steps at either side to get into the church and there were too many steps leading upward. A weird building indeed. Beneath the steps on the ground floor was a lower door to the basement. Guarded with its iron gate and showing many chains, somehow or other the holy edifice was enough to remind one of a big bulldog in the path.

Coleen saw a priest coming down the steps. The rather handsome father, who was a Polish priest, smiled and spoke to the stranger within his gate. The good man was on his way to a home of new made grief. A trapper boy had been injured in the mine. He was only a little fellow and death was coming so soon, so soon. Father Jarenski was grieved. Death had claimed the father of this boy in the mine. It had waited too for another son. Was it possible that human life was necessary for the sustenance of that foe? It did appear to be the case.

A bright, pretty girl passed Coleen. She gave him a whimsical look, walked on, turned and looked back. Coleen was only thirty-six years old, still a handsome man, and she was wondering who he was. Coleen did not return the look, he thought only of one woman, though he could observe others if he cared to. At the next corner he saw a woman who did attract his attention. It was Sonia. The wistful eyes of the girl-wife were looking down the street in search of her father. She was a widow who had returned to her father's home and each day she went to the saloon to take him home. The great mine had robbed her of her boy-husband. Some day a little baby was coming and Tony would never know, no, never see the baby! Sonia's grief was so new, so fresh, so hard to bear that she made daily visits to the cemetery, there to weep in her wretchedness

over the clay mound with its wooden cross and brilliant red immortelles.

The station presented its usual noisy, bustling scene. Men, women and children hurried to and fro. Children played tag, screamed, romped or cried. Several men who sold papers were waiting for the train to get their usual stock of daily news from Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Dozens of miners sat outside the building or rested on beer kegs. Traveling men walked over from the railroad hotel, glanced at the bulletin board and some did not swear softly. The train was late.

The editor sat down in the main waiting room. Several men were discussing labor questions. This attracted Coleen for he had heard that Garthage might be in another universal strike and if this did occur, as it had the year before, when business was paralyzed for months, he was not quite sure that his present location was what he wanted.

"You see it is useless to think the laborer can control capital," spoke the man who was Mr. Holmes, one of the business men on an upper street. "I don't know but that it is as well to follow the man with the money. You don't get any satisfaction this way, you know."

Coleen who had just appeared did not know what had just been said; but it was evident the men were thrashing over the old subject of labor and capital. It was heard in every place. It seemed to be the element at work in the heart, brain and body of all men who took any part in the industrial world.

His eyes brightened. He turned as the man spoke and hesitated. He caught himself feeling for a pencil. After all it was a part of his business to know what the men in that town were thinking, and no man had delved deeper into the subject than the stranger who listened and thought.

To him it meant—everything. It had sent him across a continent. He had felt the lash and he knew the scorn of it. He recalled something intimate, something so close to his own heart that it was not unlike the thrust of an Arab's knife, driven by a woman's hand! Yes, Coleen did know. He had given his best years while learning and he wondered just how much the men knew who were discussing what was so near to his own thoughts all the time.

One man woke, apparently, and snapped his fingers. He had been listening while others talked. He had been leaning against the wall, like a part of it, but suddenly came to life. Coleen wanted to laugh with his usual jolly whoop when the man spoke, for he seemed to be giving the editor a side swipe greeting, if Coleen wished to take it that way.

"As I think of failure and success, just as we have it right in a little place like this, I don't suppose it is different from what it is in every town or city. The most general and common cause of failure is lack of capital. Many men venture into business with just enough money to 'swing' the enterprise for a month or so, at the end of which time they expect the new business to be self-supporting. It seldom is, and the concern becomes a financial cripple. The inevitable is sure to happen."

"Labor or no labor," murmured his listener, out of an apparent slumber, "don't you think lack of business instinct and business enterprise has a lot to do with it? There is the case of Cansby who came here without a cent. His wife did his thinking for him, and actually taught him how to produce, or where on earth would he be today? Her loyalty was a part of the game and today that woman has a chain of stores up and down this valley, everyone fighting that all powerful mail-order Octopus, while a lot of business men right here are

letting it eat them alive. I tell you, you can talk from now until Doomsday; but if you don't have that fighting spirit in you to take care of your own, you can't stay here and you are of as little use elsewhere. The most pronounced cause of business failure is lack of patronage and inability to get it. You have to go after trade; it doesn't come to you, and even if the mines do close here, do we have to depend on them? There is coal enough there to last for twenty years; but if operations cease tomorrow, is that any reason why other industries have to lie idle? Hardly, in this territory, towns all around you, and you closer to them, than they are to any city. You see the mails are going right over your heads and after a while it will be over your bodies as well as my own. And one of the very first men to squeal will be one who never said a word of warning. That's the kind of men who don't do a thing to a town but add a little to the population by their presence, and such men are not needed."

The talker had not weighed his words but he spoke slowly, like a man who thinks before he speaks or while he talks. He knew that no man will dispute the fact that residents of even such towns as Garthage, where a general business was carried on, can and do enjoy a pronounced advantage over the people living in the Cities where the population is congested. He said as much; but of course some did not agree with him.

A bevy of pretty girls, laughing and jostling around the ticket window broke pleasantly on the waiters; for laughter is contagious. Evidently the good-looking ticket agent was a friend of the girls, for pleasantries were well met and he had a difficult time parring their merry ejaculations. They were making the usual evening call. Lonesome girls like these, are found at almost all small railroad stations. They follow the

crowd for no reason other than to see what is going on and to be in the midst of something a little enlivening. Then these girls knew Brewster. He went to their parties. No person questioned their presence there or wondered at their noisy pleasure. School girls are innocent merrymakers at best and these were to be June graduates.

In the distance sounded a train whistle, low and not quite clear, but muffled by the great tunnel and distant hill. But the engine snorting through the long tunnel, blowing its black breath back into the great open space drew in at the station.

Coleen grasped the letter in his coat pocket. It told him she was coming. O, God, how he wanted her! It had been many, many months since he had seen her. How he disliked to take her to his ugly rooms in the hotel. There was nothing better at the time. What would she think of a home in this mining town? The seriousness of her part in his scheme was never so painfully presented as at the moment. But he might have spared himself the fleeting thought with its pain, for the passengers came out on the platform and his dream faded.

His wife was not there!

CHAPTER II

HIS FIRST PAPER

THE people of Garthage, as well as readers of Coleen's first paper who were found throughout the county, were mildly amazed at the style. They had been accustomed to the usual weekly paper of the lower county when one was published, since the county seat had a monoply, seemingly, on all newspapers of all creeds and denominations. The usual weeklies from smaller towns were unsuccessful ventures.

The Garthage News was a newspaper which bespoke all that an editor, a thinking man could put in it. It was a most interesting infant. Coleen knew his work; though his heart and mind were confused and tormented while getting out his first paper. But he was filled with honest pride in the final result.

Work, after all, is the cure. No person need know his heartache. Why should he tell anything? He could work. He would work. What was the use to back down and give up early in the struggle? The only woman on earth who meant anything to him was thwarting his plans. How well she knew what he was doing and why he was doing it. Could love be true that held the least doubt? He thought of the boy. Only once had the thought of the little fellow caused the father to stop his work and wish never to resume it. Wasn't his labor of love for both?

It was the second day of his reportorial round. He had returned to his office with his notes and his first installment of advertisements.

"What is it for?" he asked himself. The quiet of the

little office gave no gentle reply. The man bowed his head on his folded arms which lay heavily on his desk. He scarcely breathed with the heavy weight of soul oppression. Men pray in this quiet attitude. Others prepare for suicide, and even the murderer can court his evil scheme while dreaming at his desk. Coleen was only weary with the desire for his wife and boy. She might come; again, she might not. She was whimsical, always had been.

It does seem as if unkind Fate has a way of selecting some of our best men as husbands for erratic companions who, though honorably devoted, may be deaf, dumb and blind to the big interest where they could do the most good.

This, then, was Coleen's stumbling-block. She had so many opportunities to uphold him. She was not doing it and, as he thought of the boy, he silently wondered what the little fellow would think—in time? Probably what his mother taught him. And the mother of his boy thought as her father thought, and Coleen hated the man as his bitterest enemy and foe. Each was an editor.

He opened the papers before him. He would make a good paper. His resolve was as solemn as the litany.

One advertiser read the paper. Instinctively he knew the man's value as a newspaper maker, but he wondered why any man with Coleen's versatility, strength and native wit was in Garthage. Garthage was not the place for him. Something wrong!

He threw his paper down on the table in the Council room and turning to several men in the office, he pointed at the paper, saying: "There is something worth while in that man. Best to cultivate him. He has something up his sleeve. If he isn't a crook, he is a schemer. I rather imagine there is something crooked somewhere.

One thing—he is mixed up in everything. He will show his cards before long, and I don't think it will be long before he throws his hand, face up, on the table."

"You are devilish suspicious," added Cansby. "Personally I like the man. I like a mixer and what is more, I imagine that whatever sent him here is of a domestic and not a business nature. You can't get anything out of him that he doesn't care to reveal, yet his general habits are all right and I have an idea he had a pull up some place; maybe is down and out financially, and even Garthage is not a bad place to recuperate financially if a person pursues the right course."

Squire Bates, old and learned in the ways of men, listened in silence. From time to time he beat a desultory tat-a-tat on both arms of his chair, dreamily blinking at a half-burned out incandescent. When the men had discussed the first edition of Coleen's paper, Bates picked the paper up, folded it carefully, pressing the creases to original evenness, habit of a man who has ever pursued a sort of orderly course in business and can find pen, paper, blotter or stamps in a dark room.

"I don't know what he is," said Bates. "I used to judge men; but I don't do it now. I made too many wrong guesses. I admire this man's candor. I like the hustle in him and I can't see where he can work an evil motive or pursue anything damaging to this neighborhood or its people by merely turning out a little weekly sheet. I was talking with him the other day in his office. He isn't narrow, not a bit of it, and one thing that interested me greatly was what he said about the mail-order Octopus. It does beat everything how the mail-order houses are stripping the country."

"Well, you know it does not affect us here. There is no need of any business man in Garthage feeling the burden of the mail-order industry. We furnish what

the people want, and I don't think our trade is hampered by this influence. It may be different elsewhere, though I can't believe it."

"You can't?" spoke one of the councilmen, George Kirk. "Well, I want to tell you that in the last year I know for a dead certainty that I have issued thousands of dollars worth of post office orders to different mail-order houses; and I have been astonished this spring at the enormous amount of purchases made by the farmers. Go over to the freight office and ask Newell what he is doing in handling freight and express from these concerns." This postmaster knew.

But the subject was uninteresting. Cansby started something about the hanging strike. This was their interest. The miners constituted the general number of buyers. They spent all they earned. To have them tied up in the long strike was the Jonah of their deeper meditation, so Coleen and his paper were forgotten, but not for long, for the breezy Coleen opened the door, walked in and greeted all men in that congenial style that bespeaks fellowship and brotherhood among men. And the men were equally gracious. Naturally he asked what they thought of the paper, since each was an advertiser. The remarks being complimentary, he did not remain long, only to make a few inquiries, making the usual notation on the folded paper he brought in with him, then he left.

At the corner of the street he met another councilman who stopped him. "Are you going to lick the liquor question here?" he inquired.

Coleen smiled.

"I did not come here to lick anything. I'm not trying to reform the world. If anything comes up concerning this industry, I expect to say what the occasion demands; but I never trump up stuff to make my story,

too much good stuff for that. Do you drink?" Coleen diverted the question with a boyish laugh.

"I do not drink! I never have! I never shall! Understand that, Mr. Coleen?"

"You just bet I understand it. It is bad business. I don't do it myself, but I have. I have been lit up like all Broadway and it sure does put a zip to some literary work, for a while. But I know this—it isn't the drinking man who makes good. But you can go back in history until you can dig no more into its mysteries, and there you will find that the men who made the world go round were not the men who never touched liquor, but those who did and quit."

His listener did not believe him. He walked on, faithful to the mandates of the testament he always carried in his coat pocket. That day he had cheated a widow of a very small sum of money; but he did it legitimately, he made himself imagine.

Coleen often prayed. He sang divinely in the church; but, as he watched the retreating figure of the man with the peanut-shaped head, he inwardly chuckled, "The chump," with the belief that his inward ejaculation was true.

The next day Coleen heard that one of the councilmen had remarked that the new editor was strongly in favor of the saloon, believing that only the men who drink are the ones capable of putting a shoulder to the business wheel when it refuses to revolve.

Looking down with that studious brown-study gaze which characterized his actions when dealing with a "scoop," he quickly lifted his head with a defiant upward jerk, laughed and walked on. He had little respect for the drunkard from choice; he never withheld a kindly hand to the struggler in need of a friend at the critical turning point when he, too, learned there was nothing in

drinking. So, with these mixed thoughts, he returned to the office, there to get out his second paper.

CHAPTER III

THE MISSING PATRIOTS

COLEEN'S career was not phenomenal at all. He got out his weekly, making a good showing each week. His work was pleasant, and added interests made the business more lucrative. He engaged a clever young woman to handle small locals and outside correspondence from neighboring towns. He doubled and trebled his circulation. The paper grew thrifty and better-looking while the man at the helm pursued the usual routine, though not without many conjectures from persons who never quite understood the man's coming to Garthage. If he was married, no person knew it but the postmaster; and the postmaster had a short memory. He did not repeat office affairs to the general public. Consequently many persons believed the handsome young editor to be a bachelor. It concerned no person, therefore, no interest was taken in his personal affairs.

He was with many of the thousands who went to Halliday's Cove on the Fourth of July to engage in the patriotic festivities of the day. He went because it was the only place to go.

It was a hot, dry, breath-taking day in town; but the moist green woods with the blue-green waters, like a miniature lake, swirling in the depths of the woods, were most inviting to the picnic makers. The wearing of flags proclaimed the spirit more than anything else.

Long before he reached the woods, Coleen heard the soft Italian music, played by their own local band. He loved it. Each man was a musician. Their selections were of that Italian sweetness and tenderness that has

peculiar charm apart from most music. Presently he came in sight of the immense dancing platform where many young persons were dancing. He smiled at the sight, glad of that feeling which made so little difference in nationality, but joined in a spirit of merry-making, pleasing to all.

He passed a group of foreigners seated in a merry group under huge forest trees. Close to him was a familiar face. It was Sonia, gazing down at her two weeks' old baby, passing a forefinger around the delicate contour of a tiny Italian face, puckered, pink and not very pretty. But Sonia's grief was turned to tenderest joy; for the baby was a tiny toy, and Sonia was only a child, after all, and how dearly she loved that baby!

That deep look, like a prayer in a man's eyes, glanced at other children, many, no doubt, the age of his own boy. He had never felt so lonely in his life. He was down-hearted. The thought came to him that even Italian dance music was no consolation to him; that there was something lacking around him that the crowd could not furnish; and something there he did not want. There were thousands of persons present that were strangers to him. He believed his paper to be responsible for this great gathering. He had announced the noted speakers who were to address the afternoon crowd, and he urged the mayor to prohibit any intoxicants on the ground, having heard that mostly were these picnics of mixed nationalities ended in a drunken disgrace and sometimes crime. Every saloon, as a result, was closed. The crowd was happy.

But the speakers did not arrive. A wreck up the road would delay the train for hours. The result was most disappointing to those who really enjoyed good speaking; for many could not dance or take part in other amusements.

Some member of the committee asked Coleen if he would speak. "What," he asked, pleased and yet alarmed, "why when I try to filter my thoughts through my lungs, I can't even remember one of the presidents by name. I don't know a bit more what to say than one of these miners—go get some person who has made a study of Fourth of July speeches."

The outcome was that he was forced to go on the platform, if only to satisfy those who wished to hear the afternoon address. He did not think he could speak five minutes. He did not like the job at all; but he went on the platform, nevertheless, and rushed blindly ahead by saying: "I'm not the speaker you sent for; but I am here with all the stage fright that is necessary for a greenhorn, and I have the ice pitcher."

The cheering was feeble. Coleen expected that. He waited a moment.

No doubt you have at times been walking quietly along, not really looking for anything; but of a sudden you saw a bright meteor flash its way across the dome of heaven. You wondered where it came from, what made it fall, where it went. It was one moment when you wondered just why that thing occurred. It was not a meteor that attracted Coleen, the lonely man who faced so many persons, some who would comprehend, others who could not even follow his language. But, well back in the crowd, he saw a face, the face of a young woman, so different from the rest, with her beautiful face poised, and eyes, maybe blue ones, gazing right into his own. The intelligence of that face, the look that swept across the distance between them, sympathetic, understanding, lovable, captivating, made the man recall that some place, somewhere at some time, he had heard that most forceful speakers single out a person in the

crowd and address their speeches to that one person who gives promise of being an intelligent listener.

John Coleen looked away; but the next instant he glanced back at the young woman and something swift, sure and purposeful played its mysterious part between the speaker and her.

"What is it I can say to you who come here imbued with the solemnity and beauty of this day in our Nation's history? Instead of speaking to you of the making of a nation, its laws, its countless plans for a better and more perfect government, I believe I shall talk to you as to a body of men and women who have a nation's interest right at home where you each have your home, your interests, hopes, and many of you your business. To speak broadly of the nation's welfare or to recall the old speeches of freedom and freedom's cause or of our so-called independence, is harping on a well known theme which we have known for years. There is a pride which ought to come just as close to us, and I shall call it community pride of local patriotism."

He bowed to the resounding cheers and the wave of fluttering handkerchiefs. She, the one he meant to address neither cheered nor smiled. She encouraged him with that look.

"Duty is a power," he continued, "whether it is for the nation or rests right at home in ever so small a circle. It rises with us in the morning and goes to rest with us at night. It is co-extensive with the action of our intelligence. It is the shadow which cleaves with us, go where we will.

"Let us do our duty in our shops, our kitchen, in the market, the street, the office, the farm, the school, the home, just as faithfully as if we stood in the front ranks of some great battle and knew that victory for mankind depended upon our bravery, strength, and skill.

When we do that, the humblest of us will be serving in the great army which achieves the welfare of the world.

"It should be the slogan of every rural consumer to never send away for goods that he can just as well buy at home. Every time one of you consumers out there sends away for goods to a mail-order house that dollar, so far as your community is concerned, is practically out of circulation. Your home merchant is the one who helps keep up your schools, your churches and your town. He is the one who deserves your trade and not some catalog house in Chicago, New York or elsewhere.

"Ah," exclaimed the speaker, "I see you are interested." As indeed he did, for there were many present who dealt almost wholly with these mail-order houses. They were all attention, since they knew but one feature of the transaction and that was a vague one that meant merely the institutions of accommodation which, to many, were no accommodation either. So he continued: "The thousands of small cities and villages are more important to the vitality of the Nation than its great cities. They render value to the products of the land in that they serve as the initial distributors, the most essential units of commerce which send on its way the commodities that make the physical sustenance of the whole country, and in turn serve at that magnificent cohesive power which makes the Nation strong and self reliant.

"The real menace to the smaller city and village is found in the mail-order system of purchase. If this system were to grow to its ultimate possibilities it would erase thousands of smaller population centers from the map. The large centers would serve the rural population with certain needs and the small town with its institutions of civilization, its beneficent, educational, civic and social influence would become a thing of the past. Standards of intelligence would sink and the very stability

and perpetuity of the Republic would be endangered. The small town performs a mission in the life of the Nation which cannot be minimized and which should become the earnest concern of students and statesmen and the guardians of human progress.

"That consumer is both unfair and disloyal who sends to a distant mail-order house the very money paid him by the individual or collective local townsman, when these are equipped to serve his wants equally as well. He is justified in buying where he can buy most advantageously, but he is not justified in discriminating against the town that markets his services and his products, lends value to his property holdings and connects him and his family with the great life currents of the nation.

"The prosperity of one section of the state indirectly affects all other sections. The prestige of the state, its material prosperity and all that makes for growth and development should become the concern of every citizen. Commerce knows no limitations except those fixed by price, quality, and transportation exigencies, but the man behind commerce can combine accepted principles in business with loyalty to community and state alike.

"Those who live in the same commonwealth with us, who share the same tax burdens, and obey the same laws, are entitled to our good will and patronage, whenever such good will and patronage can be extended without a sacrifice of individual advantage.

"It seems unbelievable, but it is a fact, and shows the entire lack of any sense of justice, that many persons regard their local stores as lesser institutions of accommodation. When some of you have cash to spend, you know it goes to mail-order houses; but when times are dull, when you are sick, out of work, going through a strike and when farmers are not turning their produce into cash, where do they go for credit? You know they

can't get it from a mail-order house, so they creep back to the merchants. You who do this know it is true; but I will give ten dollars to any man or woman in this crowd who can tell me that they ever received a favor from these strangers which was not paid for and paid in advance."

A loud shout went up. Coleen believed it came mostly from his advertisers. He was glad of it; but more than this that pleased him, was the apparent interest his unpatriotic talk had on these people, many who understood him better than they would an orator whose silvery discourse only waved a flag or boomed a cannon.

"I know what it is to earn a dollar, my good fellows. I have seen the time when a dollar looked to me as large as the bottom of a dishpan, even larger. A dollar comes the hardest and goes the easiest of anything in existence. I'd like to see one dollar wander back from Chicago, New York or any other mail-order trade center that has gone from a farmer and returned—listen to this—TO HIS SON.

"Kiss the dollar good-bye and mortgage the farm.

"Did any of you ever write to a catalog house and ask for credit? Did you get it? Those concerns must have cash, must have it in advance, must have it even before you see the goods you buy. The consumer sends his money and sits down and waits until the mail-order house gets good and ready to fill his order. But when people want favors or credit of any kind, they hustle to their home merchant. Did the plow arrive on time? Possibly not. Was the gas-engine broken when it arrived? It was. You were months waiting for the necessary adjustment to repair it. What of the wooden pump that came without the handle; of the milk separator that did not work properly; of the furniture which deluded you and your good wife? And, oh, tell us, you

who are devotees of the look-like-silk dresses, what did you think of the royal rag that came to you, when expectations were so high, and you were ashamed of the thing?"

A titter was heard which swelled into good-natured laughter. He knew there were female offenders in the crowd. He looked at the woman whose interested attention inspired him to speak the truth, though he lacked everything convincing in oratory. He knew he was telling the truth, so he told it easily and convincingly.

"I came from the West, from a city where it would make your very hearts ache to see the worshippers we had there to the god of Mammon. I can't describe the countless tragedies that occurred in high society where the mad rush went on for style and supremacy. I have known men to go down in their own titanic fight to support the wives who first were flattered to be the recipients of their husbands' generosity, then abused it to get the tawdry jewels to bewitch and ensnare other men. It was war, cruel, death-dealing; but I tell you honestly it is not a bit worse, this money scheme, than what we have right in our midst when parents, father and mother, send their money away from this community, robbing it, robbing their children and all without promise of its return for future generations. I have seen it worked all over this country, and I have yet to find one community which is not the poorer for the experiment; and, furthermore, I have found towns as dead as hayfields after your harvest, when the money was gone and the towns were lifeless.

"All sunshine makes the desert. A smooth sea never makes a skillful mariner, neither does uninterrupted success make a prosperous town.

"This community thinks and lives and believes only in coal. You know the richness and the fertility of the

field; but you don't consider that big powers can and often do close the only industry you have that really brings fresh money into this community.

"I am, in a sense, a stranger here. I see that coal is the hub around which most of your business revolves. But for goodness' sake, and the sake of these children, and the pride of this spot on the dear old earth, don't put all your thoughts on coal. That industry may close down tomorrow, leaving every mine as silent as a tomb for months to come. We are even expecting it. In the land of the free, with all its promise and hopes, why put all our flags in one place? Think of your location; think of your sons and daughters who, in time, can develop this location into one of the most thriving cities along the Ohio Valley. We are on the railroad; we are not far distant from the river—it is just around the bend; we are above the flood line and I have thought ever since I came here of the great possibility of steel mills, factories and the like which can be brought here, simply because you have the location. The place in this respect is ideal.

"So when we get together and talk of freedom, or groan with seeming environment, I think the real patriotic thing to do is not to bemoan possible mine strikes; but prepare for future industries, something as great which brings more people here, establishing that power which comes with the masses.

"The reason I urge this is because of my strong belief in the well-known phrase, 'As goes the city, so goes the world.'

"The great cities are necessarily cosmopolitan. They are the epitome of the social world. All the belts of civilization intersect along their avenues. They contain the products of every mortal zone. They are cosmopolitan, not only in a national but in a moral and spiritual sense.

"The rush and whirl of the city intensifies all natural tendencies of man. From its fomented energies, as well as from its greater weight of numbers, the city controls. Just as this place controls something in a way; but is allowing it to slip away, to deaden Garthage, the cradle of industry.

"I don't believe one little bit in that idea that what is to be, will be. I'd like to know where in creation all of us would be if we crammed that idea into our heads. It is a lock on the wheel of intelligent progress. I do not admire a gambler who goes into business to rob you; but off comes my hat to the one who said: 'Life consists in taking chances.' Providence has instilled into the brain and heart of man the betting instinct. I regard the mail-order house as a sort of gambling house where every man, woman or child is going to get the true gambler's ill turn at some time. It is interesting but disheartening to watch you consumers trying to keep pace with these houses. Some of you will believe me, and I dare say others will have the Angel of Doubt, hovering near, whispering warnings to the fascinated buyer, but you had better listen to the god of Chance right here at home.

"I believe this platform will afford far more pleasure to the dancers than my unprepared speech will delight my hearers; but when I think of freedom on this day, I don't try to think of the freedom that was purchased with widows' tears and orphans' cries, or the wealth of the nation; but I do think of what freedom means and what liberty is to the intelligent.

"Many good men and women in this crowd came to this country to find freedom, liberty and money. It is here; but they must take chances with other conditions, study them and be with local interests as much as with the whole nation which many of you adopted

for your home. Those little foreigners, the merry children innocently playing over there in that field, will be your men and women of tomorrow. America is foreign made at best. So I say why scatter them broadcast, when it is possible to concentrate business on one spot and keep it; but not without hard work, ambition, many disappointments and some natural hinderance from people whose heads contain nothing but eyeholes! Keeping together like a big family is my pet idea of doing all that stands for the real patriotic feeling. I could talk on this subject until Doomsday; for this is a subject I have studied and one which I frequently discuss in my newspaper work; but I won't talk longer, only I hope the little I have said will redound to your interests and the growing town of Garthage."

Coleen saw several men in the committee coming toward the platform. With them was the woman who held his attention throughout the scattered talk he had given them.

They were introduced.

Natalie Neugart was the singer of the afternoon!

Ah, he knew she was not one of them. He might have known! Blended with the divine harmony of several string instruments, played by the Italians, the singer's voice, clear, deep and soul-saving, went out to those men, women and children, drawing them invisibly closer and closer to the great and good God whose children they were. That voice could save souls. It had saved souls. It was a gift from God, its purity and melody would ever ascend to the beneficent Giver of song.

Coleen did not look at her. He bowed his head. He felt the call of something that makes all men pray sometime in the journey of life. He listened and as he did so, there came to his lonely heart a maddening desire

for that subtle something that brings to every man the fullest, richest gift in life, the love and help of the right woman whose soul is attuned unto the spiritual. He had never known it. Possibly he never would; but after the songs had ceased, and the girl went away with her friends, and the clang, noise and confusion of their different noisy demonstrations, deafened and delighted, Coleen could not appreciate one word of all that he had said, true as he had been, for something else had stirred him, because he was feeling a sense of guilt in his soul for wanting what was not his, and which he had no right to covet.

CHAPTER IV

CARNIVAL OF HUMAN EVENTS

MEDIUM tall, slim, her graceful figure well defined under her blue dress, Natalie was singing one of those Italian songs which calls up some far distant fairyland and unknown caresses beneath a romantic moon, kisses for which her very lips were thirsty. But the scene was not beneath Italian skies, only the harmony of soul expression came from there; since her thoughts were with a man she had met only the day before.

That man was Coleen, editor of a weekly.

The editor at the time was seated in his office. That office was as hot as the hinges thereof. His roof was like a burning-glass and every whiff that came in at his open windows was as wild heat waves from red hot metal.

Despite the oppression of the day, he wanted to work for the outing he had enjoyed the day before had filled his brain with fresh ideas. Never before had he realized so fully the importance of his own work, or its significance to the general public. Many plans of the past were not fruitful; but he was not the man to believe that chance had fled when luck fell dead. He knew his wits could win in his own game. And he sincerely hoped there were years full of days just as good as the ones he had lived.

He was not thinking of the singer in the woods! He had forgotten her song! Yesterday was but a vague kingdom of events, if it was to include his sentimental nature. Rich, ripe and powerful was his capacity for

love; but the merciless hot sun that turned his office into a small inferno was not luring him to thoughts of any woman; though he had the keenest ambition to think and write. Good nature is more than a time saver, since it frequently gives the necessary zip to a man's jaded spirit, spurring him on to greater achievement. And Coleen laughed good naturedly as he banged back the lid of his desk.

That very morning while cleaning out his trunk, destroying letters, papers and useless articles which even a man will save, he re-read a letter. One remark alone came to him at the moment when he pushed up the roll of his desk, ready to adjust his typewriter before him. The same sentence had glared at him before. When first he read it, it was as if seeing a sign written with fire on a calm evening sky. It was from his wife: "You have reached your level—you've quit trying."

Was she correct? He thought not. Because he had demonstrated a capacity for judgment and tact, surely no labor for the cause of humanity, be it ever so menial, could be wholly wrong. It was not because she had written the term. He knew she had never conceived the idea; that it was caught as one of her father's acid expressions; so he let it go, knowing that it was only a part of the power against him, of no grave concern.

For a minute his good nature reflected bitterly on that particular man who had hurled the expression at his daughter. He talked to her and ever had, even as he had stung every associate in the office, as he had tried and failed, when reviling the husband of his daughter. Yes, Julia was quoting her father.

At the time the torrent of abuse had fallen on Coleen, publicly before many subordinates in the office, he wheeled, clenched his fists and reached for a chair to

steady himself, thought better and walked closer to his father-in-law.

"You are the failure," he said, much calmer than he thought he could speak the few words. "These boys, these reporters, these hard-working girls, may mistake your impertinence as a manifestation of superiority. Your pomposity doesn't blind me! You haven't an idea in your head that wasn't created by some money-making machine gang that paid you to accept and publish it!"

It all came back as he sat in his office—the man who attempted to drag him out of the office. Then Coleen laughed as he recalled how he had whirled on the puny reporter, then shoved him down a flight of steps. It wasn't the man he wanted to throw down the steps; but it applied the monkey-wrench to the safety-valve of his emotions and saved him from thrashing his father-in-law.

He knew, did this Coleen, the man of brains in the mining town, that what a man publishes in his newspaper is not necessarily his own individual thought. Often they are the prepared articles written by fools who sit under the dome at Washington, ready to crucify a nation at the toss of a hat. There are men in power from center to circumference of the globe and what to them is of greater importance than the very medium of the press for much of their nefarious work? A nation might writhe in an agony of blood and but few, if any, of our selfish congressmen would lift their hands to save. Sovereignty of power meant money. Money at any trick was the game. Citizenship sometimes becomes a fanatic thing; but somehow or other some of the world's fanatics are men who have put their shoulders to the wheel.

Coleen put fresh paper into his machine. He turned to his assistant and local correspondent, Miss Sneddon, "You may go," he said to the tired girl. "We have

enough copy for this week's issue. It is too hot in here." Coleen's mind was like a busy bee laden with choicest pollen from a clover patch. He did not wish to be interrupted. A man who wishes to think and is interrupted in his most sublime thoughts, frequently wishes he had been born a fisherman or mender of umbrellas, instead of a fellow with an elusive thought that never returns!

He wrote and wrote. A thunder shower cooled the air. His typewriter clicked and clacked along its noisy way, interspersed by the muffled sound of "Hello, hello, hello," the never-ceasing call of a telephone operator in the back room of his office.

He pulled the last sheet from the machine, bunched them together. It would be an editorial, he planned, providing the article suited him after he read it. He usually allowed his editorials to cool over night, then frequently destroyed them. He changed his tactics. He began reading what the townspeople were to read Friday night Certainly it was not even an attempt at superior authorship—nothing but familiar assertions which an ordinary person could easily comprehend if he read it.

Charlie Holmes, always called Charles by his wife, and Buzz by the public, tilted his chair to the proper angle, hoisted his feet to his desk, and read his own advertisement in the week's paper. The cut of the piano showed up fine; the reading matter was all right; it looked nifty he thought and that was rather unusual before this paper blew into the town.

He turned to the editorials and smiled as he read the leading head, "Men Who Rob Themselves." He wondered if Brewster, the ticket agent, had robbed the till. He had learned that the young fellow was soon to marry. The reader was not thinking of more important affairs, but he read,

"No town can grow and prosper if its citizens engage

in the gentle pastime of figuratively cutting each other's throats. It ought not to be necessary to support this statement with argument; but to change the metaphor, there are so many small towns, like Garthage, where the poison of discord has done its work that the subject is one upon which a trade sermon may be preached weekly with profit.

"We don't have cut-throats in Garthage that are known as such. There may be some who practice it in private. However, we do have cut-throats in this country who probably get their victims right out of this town.

" 'As we sow, so shall we reap' describes the causation of a natural law as immutable and effective in producing results as the law of gravity.

"Garthage must be awakened. It must hear its call of duty. We don't want to go back into old history; we want to make history. We have no intention of filling hide bags with sour cream and running over the country with them on horses' backs to churn our butter. We have no use for candles where electric lights are needed. We go to the faucet and not the old-fashioned well. Our women do not drag the plowshare as does the slave woman, nor draw the peet wagons from Ireland's bogs.

"We are not living in log cabin days; but we are slipping back, back, back into the ooze and slime of indifference, ignorance, and worse than all, neglect.

"Now listen. I call attention to the impure water we have in this town. Practically every residence well excepting those situated on the hills, must necessarily contain surface water, owing to location, and that, as you know, breeds every disease on the face of God's earth. Last year you had an epidemic of scarlet fever, typhoid, diptheria, measles, and in yonder lowly cemetery is to be found the pathetic result.

"Death came quickly here, so I have been told. I

was not a citizen of the town at the time. But that Terror came to rich and poor, American, Slav, Polish, Italian, where mother's hearts were warm with the love of little children's arms. In some homes the baby boy was taken over to the lonely cemetery and the hearse returned to Garthage often to the very same house—to a doubly-distressed home. Whole families of children died. This is as fresh in your memories today as it was last August, when Hell would mean no terror to those who lived and suffered through that period of black-stricken Garthage, and the loss of whole families!

"I say rise from it, get busy! Be strong for brotherhood and fellowship!

"I think this town could well support a Community House. But first of all, what we want are men of mind, principle, determination to combine for the purpose of the uplift.

"What think you of men in whose hands is the keeping of your very hearts' interests, who seldom if ever are in session, who use as little money as is possible to defray certain expenses and none for improvement? Isn't this being done? You know the men in office, their sworn duty, what they are there for. While some do their duty, you can't truthfully say that all are doing it. Bonded officers are deaf, dumb and blind.

"I have no quarrel with any man in this town. I have a feeling of resentment against the abuse this town suffers, stricken and damned as it has been from the very day the hog-engine came here twenty-five years ago and snouted its way through yonder rock-ribbed hill to make a railroad tunnel. There have been crimes innumerable against every good cause. Garthage is not as old as the railroad; its crimes began with life.

"We have good, loyal, splendid men and women right here, the kind who make a city or town worth while.

As I have remarked before, we also have the location for greater achievements; but we must have the spirit to fight.

"Monday night of this week I dropped in at the school board meeting. I may have thought I was down at Dokey's saloon; or in the pool room. I knew I wasn't in a church; for men may spit their tobacco juice between the church seats; but not many will spit half way up the wall as they do in our council chamber. Gentlemen expectorate in vessels for the purpose. Our post-office demonstrates the abuse of tobacco.

"I have gone into that council room ever since coming here. I have taken an interest, as a citizen, in what is as much to me as yourselves. The other night the real meeting was in the Mayor's private office. Our Chief had the only chair and our august body of men straggled in one at a time, sat around the Chief like so many tailors, squatted on the dirty floor.

"The principal topic was that of displacing Mr. Pennington, our school superintendent. He has received his notice as we now know. I was strong for Mr. Pennington, a man of culture, education, refinement, a brain power who has done wonders for this place. Prejudice was strongly against him, prejudice coming from three saloon-keepers, a dentist, druggist and prosperous tradesman, coatless, collarless citizens who are all back pedaling.

"What is it for?

"When we associate with some men it is to rise to their heights or sink to their level? Are we now going to *rise* to the sublime heights of these gentlemen, the saloon-keepers in power, the dentist and others, sans coats, vests and ambition, or *fall* to the disgraceful depths by making a selection of linen collared citizens who hold meetings in respectable quarters and *don't appropriate a dollar*

apiece for every meeting held? All right, perhaps, if they even did some good.

"I have told it!

"We went over to Charlie's saloon to conclude our business affairs. Some drank; others did not. We all ate sandwiches and assorted pickles. At ten o'clock the question came up for discussion: 'What teachers to elect for the September school term?'

"To the honorable citizens of this town, once more I beg your attention. I shall not expose the certain ones who read those letters of application, nor tell you the remarks made concerning the pictures of these splendid young women who apply for our schools. I can only say that never in all my reportorial work in America, and I have visited the vilest dives on this continent have I heard anything so low, more degrading, or disgraceful than the remarks of some officers of your honorable school-board. I only say that if some of these men were known, tomorrow they would be gone, and gone so far that God 'lmighty wouldn't even look for them!

"We have this to contend with and a blemish to wipe out against pure and beautiful womanhood, the mental instructors of the children you put in their charge.

"You also have a monster to fight in this mail-order trade that is creeping on you day and night. But what is the use of telling what is to be fought if there are not enough dependable men with grit and determination to come into the fight?

"Without dispute Garthage is the dirtiest, most unkept town I ever entered. It does not have to be this way. We can make it not only properous but beautiful; educate the young to mental efficiency and usefulness; transform this scarred old hill and valley into something besides a reeking, beer-smelling hole, or a death valley dealing mostly with innocent babes. We can fight the

mail-order traffic, not single handed, but all together. We must support our churches, schools and town. We cannot get this from a mail-order house. We cannot live alone. The farmer is with us and must be our brother-in-trade. We need him as he needs us. Why not make this town a cash register?

"If we have no man in this town who wishes to volunteer for the position, I strongly advise bringing here a man who has made community prosperity a study. We have students and men of unquestioned ability for it. This is being demonstrated wherever prosperity gains a footing. But so long as we think a few thousands in this town are but camp followers, following every freshly opened mine, leaving the old ones during the strikes, I say such followers are blind, ignorant, indifferent, living from hand to mouth, gaining nothing, getting nothing, living in squalor, filth and degradation until the final call. You can't be a camp follower all the days of your life. Remember the tumble bug that rolls his home along the dusty cowpath. His breeding place is a ball of filth. He is an example of the unenlightened camp follower. One hobby in Ohio, the land of hardwood lumber, gas, automobiles, steel and iron factories, glassware, pottery—everything.

"I may provoke some of you by this plain, uneditorial ramble of thoughts. But men, women, I see it, you know it, and why must it continue? You want what you spend your money for; but so long as your existence and very life are drifting along in this manner, you know as well as I, that you are being robbed, that you are having your throats cut, and *you know who is cutting them.*"

Charlie Holmes dropped his paper. "Good Lord," he exclaimed, "that truthful cynic will have daylight put through him before he is a day older! But it's the truth,

the plain, unvarnished, gilt-edged, double-twisted truth, though it will kill him as sure as frost kills crickets!"

Holmes continued reading the editorial.

"This is exactly what will happen to Garthage if the people patronize the big city stores and catalog houses to the neglect of our own efficient dealers. We have good stores, best grade quality of goods, honorable men conducting them, men who trust you and carry you through many strikes when hardships are strangling you to death. These men, many of them, came here to conduct honorable legitimate trade; but you can't keep up trade, citizenship and business interest if you will send to catalog houses for what our own merchants have to offer at the same price, often cheaper.

"You know the big city benefits and the small community loses. What excuse can a man advance for this disloyalty?

"What return is given by the big city merchant or the catalog house for this trade? None, and none is expected.

"They just exchange their goods for the money; never money for the product of any town, not even Garthage.

"Considering all these facts, why would it not be good business to give the local merchants an opportunity to compete with the big dealers?

"If given the chance, they can do it. Just make your wants known and see how readily the goods of any grade will be forthcoming. They, not yourselves, run the risk. They may even trust you. Many of them do.

"Give your local merchants a chance to figure.

"In a community where there are various industries properly balanced, by production and consumption, and where the controlling medium of exchange—credit—is on a firm and sound basis, the products of a community are easily disposed of; prosperity and property values

increase, and the community and its people are happy and satisfied.

"Do not think because we have just a small city it is no trade center. There isn't a better one in the whole of this beautiful valley. Every trade center and center of population is a business unit, the residents of which depend largely upon one another for strength and sustenance. Their interests are mutual.

"But take from that community its principal element of strength, its credit, the effect would be inevitable, a weakening of the unit of strength.

"We have some men and women in this town who would make strong, useful, necessary factors in building this town into a city of worthwhileness. Unfortunately many of them are too busy with home duties, their own business, or that of others, to do it all. They must have support. Taking care of one's own town cannot be done quietly, not a bit more than sitting still and not crying 'fire, fire, fire' when your building is burning."

The piano dealer threw down his paper. He shook his head. "At any rate, old boy," he ejaculated heartily, "your head is level on this topic. I just know Helen Kerr would prefer a highly polished street piano to one of my very best ones, if only the thing came from Chicago. It's queer; but just the same it isn't the men—why, it's mostly the women who are offenders."

In this respect, he was certainly telling the truth.

CHAPTER V

NEW DISCOVERIES.

THE day the paper was issued John Coleen drove to Brannon, a town north of Garthage, but holding no mining interests. The town was more than a hundred years old. Here the people had married and intermarried, and an attempt was made to ever classify real aristocracy from ordinary riffraff, just as it is done in New York City, only Brannon left the selection to the word of the Lord as planned by Presbyterian or Methodist, which ever were in the ascendency.

These simple folk knew nothing of the world. No railroad whistle sounded within its border; no opera house offered an attraction to lure their youths to eternal destruction; never would a Methodist father permit a daughter to lean on the arm of any man and dance to music that made her very soul throb with just the lure of music. True, once in a while a daughter managed to get to a dance; a son learned how to play cards in the stable and hide his bottles in the hay mow; but it wasn't often that anything very serious occurred. One thing was as sure as death: if a strange man came to town and was good-looking, whether he had money or character, he could manage to spend the evening with some nice girl. Men were so scarce, (their own youths having embarked to distant shores) there to get within the velvet ropes of dazzling cafes with gayer girlhood, that Brannon girls would—flirt. Well, maybe not brazenly; but they managed to do it socially, somehow. Heaven is a witness to its mystery, but that was their only offense.

Coleen got into the town early in the day. It had been a pleasant ride over the picturesque road which is up and down hill, through ferny nooks that smell cool and sweet when shadowed in the morning and send back the whiff of a thousand sun-kissed flowers. Much of the road is shaded, though here and there he found long spaces where heat waves were vibrant as from a brazier.

He went his way. In the afternoon, crowds of gay, animated girls were walking on the street or sitting in very pretty old-fashioned yards, making embroidery or laces. A few tennis courts were seen. He had noticed the coy looks of several girls. Instinctively he knew the reason for the mid-summer blandishment. In a way he felt like going back into the old game, of giving look for look; but he had always held the idea that to attract attention without intention—was just another way of lying, and he had never flirted at all in his life. He had attracted attention, done it a thousand times; but always for an honorable purpose, as a man aims to please his audience. And every newspaper man uses the whole wide world for his audience.

He walked on, thinking of a couple he had met while stopping at a farm house. They were Norwegians, they told him. The man was sick. He had been a big, strong fellow, full of life and vigor. He was stricken with serious illness and his wife did the work which they could find no help to do.

He listened to the quiet way in which she told him how she had worked on the farm, driving the team, plowing, hoeing, harvesting some crops and selling others. She was a proud looking girl-woman, deep chested, strong as an animal and as beautiful. Her golden hair was sunburned as were her face, arms and hands; but it had not marred the physical loveliness of the woman who had given all she could, her physical self, to aid her husband.

This, as compared with the women he knew who were burden makers and not burden bearers, shamed most womankind.

As they talked, Katrina, their only child came out on the vine-clad porch. One could easily see the health, beauty and promise in this child of well mated parents. Her honest blue eyes were as beautiful as her mother's deep ones and the body as shapely as health ever promises. Two soft little white hands clasped the mother's left wrist, and her shy fair head rested against her mother's arm. Katrina had much before her. Her father would get well and such couples prosper. They want to succeed.

He returned home in the afternoon, going by another road, even more picturesque, with finer views of magnificent farms, lying to the north and east. There were deserted labyrinths and cool retreats in the valley before him, or hillside farmland with modern houses of finest architecture. A small but rapid creek tumbled and flowed through the very middle of the scene before him, widening at places into what must be fishing pools or swimming holes. He could not determine their size from his point of view. He imagined his vision must carry at least a hundred miles to the horizon, the air was so clear.

His meditation was cut short by a voice saying:

"Why Mr. Coleen, good afternoon!"

He drew rein on his horse.

Before him stood Natalie Neugart, the girl singer, pretty, radiant, girlishly wholesome in a simple dress of some summery fabric. She was the very picture of Summer personified.

He reached out his hand to take hers, a small soft hand made to be held. He looked at her admiringly, then dropped the toy he held.

"I am going home; but tell me where did you come from? I haven't seen you since you—since I—oh, since we stared at each other!" He explained it awkwardly enough.

She laughed musically. "I am going home and it is a whole long mile from here. I was out walking. Of course I shall ride home with you. I should have been home hours and hours ago; but I am a regular wanderlust in the summer."

"Do you mean to say you live in the country?"

"Why, of course. My father is a farmer. I have no mother, nothing but Susan and Tony and others, you know. I'm the only child; but I am a farmer too and not ashamed of it."

"Ashamed?" he bantered easily, "I should say not. You are many things, singer, farmer and—I don't know what else, but I dare say quite a nice little butterfly girl."

Every feature of her little face, in its frame of red-brown hair, her low Grecian forehead, her big blue eyes, her small nose and rather full mouth was pretty, though she was not really beautiful as he imagined her to be when viewed at a greater distance.

And Natalie, motherless, who was born for love, was as eager for it as ever were the girls of Brannon. But she was—different. You always find difference in girls who have or have not gone to first class colleges. And Natalie had. She studied music at a college for women in West Virginia.

She was telling him of this school where her teacher was a secluded Patti, who had vowed that the voice which God had given to her should be given back to Him.

"And I—why I pray to have a voice like hers," she added confidentially. "Do you think I shall attain my wish?"

"With a voice like yours and such perfect faith in God, I guess you'll get it. I want you to." He smiled kindly.

He looked away from her. He was not caring for her voice. He respected the hallowed wish in her simple life, not yet full, because of its lack of love.

The dainty singer seemed very much embarrassed at the effect her confession had had, and tried to justify her remark by saying: "You know I have to have something. I do get so lonely in the country, and I would not tell papa for all the world."

She bewitched him.

We men and women of the world call it another name: Wise men say such women save them; and Jealousy flips her head, breathing "demoralizing" on the poisoned atmosphere.

Unurged by the master hand (to make more rapid strides,) the horse walked slower and slower. Following a natural inclination to rest and nip grass, he turned into a grassy spot beneath a huge tree and stopped.

Though each noticed what had happened, neither cared. They talked as only friends can talk. He listened most of the time. It was like finding a new heaven to listen to the fresh sweet, simple ideas of this girl with her healthy, wholesome logic and good sense. She was too pretty to be intellectual; and too smart to be dull or uninteresting. Her mental attitude was almost childlike, though she frequently used a woman's logic in making her point.

For a long time he looked away, over into the distance, now denser and cooler than his former view. What would be a night in this place with that sky full of stars? How would yon pool be on a moonlight night, with this girl by his side?

"I must go," he exclaimed suddenly. He picked up

the reins, drew them between his gloved fingers, then dropped them as he saw the look of disappointment spread over her face. No, she was not coy like the girls of Brannon; but she wanted him to stay a little longer.

And he did stay.

He wanted a minute to himself to quiet the cursed suggestions that went wildly through him. He wanted to kiss her. He wanted to take her in both arms and draw her close to his whole body, to feel her little self cuddled in arms that would want nothing more of God than to hold her eternally and forever in love's embrace. She was the woman he could kneel down by and pray to his God. She was the one who surely could mold his life, (as every right woman can, to a certain degree, help some man.) Oh! his kisses against her kisses, always her kisses, in spite of everything!

Just as quietly as a father kissing a little daughter good night, he turned his face to hers, tilted her chin and softly kissed her.

It was his first offense against his vow to God. He had lied to God, to Julia and even to the baby boy at home.

Why didn't she mock his tenderness? Why did she not say something? Why did her warm hands reach up and draw his face to her own lips? They did! Then as if something bade her ask the question, she looked very startled and whispered:

"Oh, are you married?"

He could lie. Most men would. He wanted to. The faithful eyes looking up into his own, tenderly awaited his reply.

To save his soul he could not tell her. Shame, worse than ten thousand harpies from the Unknown, screamed vengeance at him for stealing a young girl's love and

caresses. That she liked him he had known from the minute their eyes met that day in the woods.

He threw his arms around her and his head he held close beneath her head, just above her breast, her head thrown a little back. Quivering and shaking in her arms, in the storm of passion that fairly terrorized him, he only shook his head.

With both hands she lifted his head. His eyes were moist with tears. Then, as if the girl came out of a perfect maze, she threw back her head and said, "My God, my God, you are married!"

He drove on to her house. They even talked, but not of anything in particular. She got down at the gate without his assistance. He wanted to help her, but she hastily got away. Then she looked up with a pitiful smile and spoke:

"It was my fault, perhaps. You know I have no mother. I am always hungry for love and I like you."

"And I love you, Natalie. Someday I shall tell you how much and I won't see you until I can tell you. But my kiss was a kiss of love, the sweetest I have ever known, so don't worry, little sweetheart I will make it all right."

But how can a married man make it all right when he abuses the confidence of a trusting, simple-hearted girl? Maybe he meant it. He certainly did. But he wondered how he could go back to Garthage and hide that black spot on his heart. Such men as those who go without collars and cuffs and steal the public's money, were thoroughbred gentlemen to his way of thinking, to the man who kissed a motherless girl whose only weakness was for the tenderness and affection she had missed and was missing.

It was late when he entered Garthage.

That night when leaving his office, Coleen was shot

by some unknown would-be-assassin. He fell face downward without even a sound. The men who picked him up said he was dead.

CHAPTER VI

COMING EVENTS.

WHEN Coleen next opened his eyes he wondered where he was. He looked from a window, saw the dense foliage of trees and could smell the odor of petunias. Then he slept again, quietly and without pain. When again he opened his eyes, he saw the Polish priest sitting by the window, reading a paper. The fine old face was like a priceless cameo.

"Where am I?" asked Coleen.

"Well, well, I see you are awake. You are at my house; but please don't talk—instructions of the doctors, you know. The hotel was no place for you and we could not take you to the hospital. You were shot, you know. No, no, no, please don't talk. My sister, who is my housekeeper, and I are taking care of you."

"I'm not a Catholic," whispered Coleen.

"Certainly not, certainly not," smiled the priest; "but you are a brother in God's sight and it was just as much my duty to care for you when you needed it, as for one of my faith and church. Don't talk—another time."

The quiet repose of the spotless room, neither hot nor cool, quiet and peaceful, was, after all just what the sick man most needed. But with the return of consciousness, came a mortal sting that hurt him worse than the wound. The miserable act of his homeward trip came back to him, lashing him with a thousand stripes, making welts on the soul if not the body.

"That little, little girl," he meditated, "a child and a woman, more child than woman, hopeful, trusting,

expectant of all the world holds for her in its love and promise."

Always had he despised men who took advantage of innocence or ignorance. He did not like to think of that moment of physical weakness, coupled with his starved life, that he, of all men, had been no better than the ones he had ever condemned for this abuse against the love of a woman, any good woman.

Then, with a sigh, he thought of his wife, Julia, the wife of his youth, the mother of his boy; but strange to say, she seemed very, very far away. He no longer thought or wondered just where she was. The boy was a dim picture, each fading gradually from view, dimmer and dimmer, and both replaced by the face of a young woman, looking up into his face, pleading her cause through the cry of wanting affection.

He wanted Natalie. He vowed he would never see her until he could do so honorably. Yet as he thought of her at this moment, he knew that, if he were well, the chances were he might see her. See her he would!

As the editor recovered slowly in the tranquil home of the aged priest there was much time for careful meditation. For one thing, it was certainly a privilege to be associated with a man whose liberal education made him a most delightful companion during those days when the sick man was lonely and discouraged. Many times had Father Jarenski smilingly told of incidents in his own life, particularly those lived during his boyhood days, in Poland, when life to him had been seen through rosy glasses. He wanted to write—to write lyrics—and there was a desire to paint pictures of beautiful women. Many had been the calls to play tragedy to an appreciative audience; then came the holy role, the noble one of saving men's souls. He had reached the place where no man values too highly the standards of suc-

cess and excellence. They were matters of long ago to the aged priest, tottering down the sunset hill of life toward Eternity—and Eternity is so long!

"Yes," answered Coleen one day when the subject was taking an almost pessimistic turn, "you know the largest part of a man's power is latent. We all beget expectations that are not performed. I have an idea, possibly the wrong one; but an idea for the betterment of living conditions; and I hold that we must direct our lives that way or we are not much more than mere chunking."

We know that the reverberation is longer than the thunder-clap. It was true in the condition that made the present environment for the editor. He was able to return to his duties; but it was in a different atmosphere; not the clear pure atmosphere lately charged with lightning, but dense with choking powder from a close range battle. He was not wanted!

He went to his desk, threw back the lid, adjusted his typewriter. Alone, undaunted, unafraid, he looked from the idle keys to the inanimate objects in a depressingly quiet office. His thoughts went straight to the man who had tried to take his life.

"You shot me for some reason, you Thing of the night; now here is some more just like it!"

He wrote for long hours. He avoided mention of the tragedy to himself, other than to use it evasively in explaining why any town, it mattered not what town, made the grave mistake of not electing proper men for different offices. To bunch together the best and worst element, the business men; also those men of little or no business instinct in the community, mentally unprepared for important offices, to say nothing of worth while men, sufficiently capable but too busy for the additional burden, he discussed at length. This, he told them, was their stumbling block. He paid tribute to the gentlemen at

the helm, deploring their unenviable position since no helpful assistance was possible without a rigid campaign to that effect. The school-board and the common council were the same class of officers. Their business was bunched.

But he came back swift and sure at the officers who appropriated funds for sitting in holy conclave at the saloon, charging one dollar each for nothing but their honored presence! He felt the shot of a .32 calibre less than some town officers who came under the lash of that one strong editorial. He meant it to drive home. As a public assembly of officers should stand for the acid test of manly force, he showed the readers wherein there was little or no force at all. He did not hesitate to dwell on the main idea that it was the inequality of principles that brought about the condition.

His very soul might shuffle in iron handcuffs, and any man might turn turnkey on him or assassinate him; for he possessed no occult power to draw opinions from the minds of men, though he felt that every town, city or village is in need of power where business is to be sustained for any length of time, to promote sturdy growth.

That, alone was his object. He hid it no longer. He faced his battle alone, lost many advertisers, found new friends, lost a cause at times while gaining a serviceable point in the attempt. With standards of natural equity and public advantage, his paper grew in interest, as naturally it would. The world loves curiosity. Coleen presented it with the impact of an iron fist, and thus became the Caesar of his own weekly newspaper.

It is strange; but not many of us care to have our solemn friends warn us. At best, most of us are children who want to touch the fire—just once, if never again. It is so in public affairs as it is in private matters. Coleen had placed himself where he could touch the fire or with-

draw. He was venturesome. Those who knew him best admired him for his imagination. No one could read his articles or listen to his public addresses, and feel that it was a waste of time.

Peace slipped quietly into the place of receding chaos; but a new newspaper was started and Coleen was the least interested person in Garthage. He knew the policy of the paper, just which men were instrumental in bringing the new editor to Garthage. He met the editor, shook his hand in jolly good fellowship, invited him to visit the office, really flourishing his own trumpet the while.

But, if he felt no disturbance, at least he was anxious to see the first sheet. How they would lambast Coleen! He could even see the big black heading. He was ready for the attack. The paper would be out Wednesday afternoon. But it did not arrive on schedule time. The new editor was drunk! Thursday he was slightly sober, met Coleen and told him he had just dined on a fish, bones and all, and drank some beer. Coleen laughed at the sally. Friday the advertisers were furious—no paper. Saturday found the editor decidedly under the influence of Garthage's well known Polish drink—polinky.

Sunday afternoon the papers were issued. Coleen grabbed his copy, went to his room, closed the door, thought better and opened it again.

There was not a word concerning Coleen. It was devoid of everything pertaining to the man or the principle he backed up. Taken as a local newspaper, it wasn't half bad. But it was a sickening sheet for the advertisers, the backers.

The fearless Coleen laughed heartily. He even wrote this head under his obituary notices.

"DIED A-BORNIN'—THE ENTERPRISE,
AGE—ONE WEEK."

And much of his boyish fervor came back. Victory was his to toss high and catch. He used his polished criticism liberally, paying tribute to no person but the young lady who assisted on the new paper. And she wondered whether it was an eulogy to her solitude or a real sentiment of pity, possibly both.

That week the second paper in Garthage died, died just as Coleen had predicted; and even his advertisers had to laugh, and laugh they did, finally returning to Coleen's office with their advertisements, or as some of them expressed it, "Over at the market of scandal."

Then Coleen came into his own, alone, carrying his own banner. He did not make a big noise. He could turn any point with a single look and that laugh. It was his weapon at times. He used it like an eloquent Presbyterian should. He had never hoped to dream on as angels dream; but to fight as only a man can and will. He fought!

CHAPTER VII

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH NATURE

ONE Saturday afternoon during the early harvest season, Holmes was ready for a jaunt across country in his machine and invited Coleen to go along. At that time automobiles were luxuries for the rich and a ride was a treat. Coleen, of course, accepted. Holmes had been the one man, tried and true, through many of the editor's dark days. There is usually one man of this type in every community.

Before them stretched the great and beautiful Ohio valley, with many hillocks, small mountains and warm, wide fields of golden harvest, some noisy with the machinery at work, separating gold from dross. The country was beautiful. Noble purple and white asters graced the hillsides; life-everlasting bowed its heavy white heads as if the sturdy little bushes were old men and women, walking solemnly to church; fronds of ferns hung damp and glistening from wet rocks, while graceful yellow plumes hid many a barren spot where goldenrod loves to flourish.

Why is it that men care so little for the beautiful country and its great possibilities that they crowd like frightened sheep to the city, blindly following a leader? Here were many of earth's richest gifts; but it really appeared that the very ones who know best what the soil contained were not the old farmers of bygone days; but foreigners who grew food stuff from the roadside to the front door.

Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds exhilarate the spirit and restore the tone to languid nature. There is

virtue in country houses, in gardens, in fields, streams and groves, in rustic recreation and plain manner, that neither cities nor universities enjoy.

If you figure that country life is healthy to the body, it can be no less so to the mind. When you can find time to tear yourself away from the responsibility of business in the midst of the rush and hurry of city life, go to the country and make a fresh beginning.

It was exactly what Coleen was doing. The scene brought him back to a picture hidden in memory's store, with thousands of flowers, murmuring brooks, the image of his young mother, that patient womanly mother, ready with her touch of love that healed every pain he ever suffered. Allcarefree happiness then; now the reverse. Coleen was again in love with life.

"It's great, isn't it?" Holmes asked, stopping the machine, "the fellow that owns any of this has all he needs."

"I own a piece of it back there," Coleen explained.

"You own it? Where did—well, I musn't get personal. I didn't know, you see."

Coleen laughed.

"You see," he explained, "it was a tract of land left by my grandparents to my mother. I never paid any attention to it, only to pay the taxes. I came down here over a year ago, saw the place, so settled here for a purpose."

"And I'll bet I know the purpose if I know where your land lies."

"Well, it's known as 'Dilly's Peninsula,' if you know where that is, and it extends back to the Perrin Run mines. I also have about twelve acres of mighty good timber there, too."

"I've missed my guess; I thought perhaps your ground was on this side—plenty of gas and oil over there; but

no good oil pockets on this side," pointing to the left, "still, that land is rich and good and should be profitable if properly farmed. But, really every farmer over in that section is land poor. Know that? I'll bet you never saw a finer lay of land anyplace you have gone, than you can see right up here."

He started the machine which went spinning easily up the great Laurel Hill. At the top the machine was stopped and Holmes indicated field upon field of golden grain, dense woods, magnificent pastureland, with many herds of fine cows grazing throughout the meadowland.

"That's all Neugart's," he explained. "That is really the only farmer right here who is not land poor, because he is just a little like the foreigners, is making every inch of it pay. You rant and rave about your mail-order traffic, you should hear Neugart talk it by the mile. What was that you said? Why does he live in that old house? What old house? My good fellow, that isn't Neugart's home. That is where he began housekeeping when he was married. His wife died in that house and he has never removed one article from it. About ten years ago he built over on the other road. You can't see the house from here; but it is almost palatial. I'll take you over that road some day. Why he is the wealthiest man in this section of the country, lives like a prince over there. Why you met his daughter, I think, over at the picnic. I know you did; for I introduced you."

Coleen took a deep breath. He seemed strangely untalkative just then. He turned, looking back of him, down the steep hill they had just climbed.

"Ohio is all right" he said, then his eyes followed a flight of reed birds soaring high above him, all moving in a cloud to a leafy woods beyond.

He wrote this editorial the following Monday morning:

"Small cities and villages are important in our commercial system. Each has a definite service to perform in its own sphere, a service that is so well defined and universally understood, that it seems a waste of time and words to go into details concerning it. But for the purpose of this writing, it is necessary to briefly analyze the functions that have been and should be performed by these centers of trade.

"In the first place the trading towns are the distributing agencies of the producers. The farmers living in the territory surrounding them produce certain crude foodstuffs and raw materials needed by the manufacturers that must be exchanged for other articles of commerce the farmers themselves consume—manufactured foods, clothing, building materials, implements, furniture, etc. The manufacturers living in cities and villages take the grain, wool, cotton, flax, cattle, sheep, hogs, in fact all produce of the farm and transform most of them into finished commercial products.

"Practically all the food of the nations comes from the farmer and much of it from plantations, and it must pass through the local trading centers on its way to the final market. All the articles of commerce consumed on the farm and by the operatives employed in the factories of the smaller towns and cities must also pass through them on their way to their ultimate consumer.

"So long as competition shall obtain in the commercial world these agencies of distribution will be necessary. When competition shall go by the board and be replaced by monopolies, public or private, the smaller merchants and the trading centers they live in will be dispensed with.

"So critical has become the situation in some of the larger cities that strenuous steps are being taken to induce members of the submerged classes to quit their

urban misery and *go back to the soil,* to the green fields and running brooks, to the independence of farm life.

"Accompanying this over-development of the metropolises of the country, there has begun a corresponding decadence of many of the smaller cities and villages. They are losing their trade to the larger centers of commerce. Garthage is among the great number of growing towns so afflicted. What is, in reality a city already, can easily be backed down and out, right now, unless we have different rules and regulations and a better understanding of our true business situation, as is now attacked by Business' worst foe—the mail-order houses.

"Manufacturing towns have felt the effect of the big commercial drag less severely than those engaged in purely commercial lines, but they have been affected nevertheless.

"The evil of catalogs and mail-order trading has grown enormously during the last decade. It has developed to a point where these gigantic corporations are now erecting and maintaining warehouses at central points several hundred miles from which shipments to the surrounding territory may be made.

"If our merchants and consumers, to say nothing right now of the farmers, each so deeply involved, do not get together to do something to stem the tide, it will be a question of few years only when the small trading centers, like our own *will be wiped out.* Competition will be merely a subject of historical interest, and monopoly will rule and ruin the land.

"In some states where farming communities abound, the farmers conceived the idea of joining together for the purpose of cooperative buying of all kinds of farm implements and utensils. They went into the proposition in a big way to "cut out" the local dealer and his profits. This effort proved quite effective during the

season when their demands were large and they could get everything in car-load lots.

It developed however. that failure was bound to result from the continuation of this method.

When their "season" was over, and they needed supplies only in small quantities it happened that their local dealers had discontinued the lines for which they had no more use when they were not buying from them and the farmers were left high and dry. In most cases the farmers "swallowed" their pride and asked for favors with the assurance that their patronage would be forthcoming in the future, and acknowledging their mistakes.

This is, of course as bad as cutting out the local dealer in favor of the mail-order house. In every such case the individual himself suffers sooner or later, because selfishness begets its own reward.

"Each local community (Garthage for example), should be PROGRESSIVE. It should perform its functions as a marketing and a trading center, leaving no opening for an outsider to divert capital and business from the natural local channels of trade. There should be no such thing as catalogs and mail-order trading.

"Last week I took a business trip over this section of the country. It was meant as a pleasure trip; but I believe in making business and pleasure the same thing when it is of vital importance. Then I met—

"Some consumers who trade in Chicago, New York, Baltimore, all patrons of the big mail-order houses.

"And I met some beautiful maidens arrayed in all of Solomon's glory, thinking they were fashion plates. Garments I saw of poor material, many of them made in prisons, or in tenement houses, where sad-faced women have consumption, or some disease that is often highly infectious.

"In yonder field was a man with part of a thrashing

machine, the other part—Heaven knows where—maybe on the road, probably never sent.

"I saw them, the men and the women, particularly the women, who peruse a catalog by lamplight and dream of inexpensive beauties. How deluded they are.

"And then I thought of the money wasted, hundreds, thousands and—yes millions of dollars, taken from just such rural scenes, and I know that not a cent of it comes back!

"Well I know that no mail-order house will give the consumer credit, not for a box of matches; even checks sent in payment of goods, must first be certified before goods are shipped; not one will help him send a daughter to school or help pay a mortgage on the home; never was catalog house known to help our school, church, or assist in anything whatsoever for the betterment of even one location. When a town loses its business grasp, every piece of property depreciates. It can't hustle and grow with a burden of unfair competition bowing it to the earth. And when people of Garthage scoffed at the idea I presented, that a great amount of money went out of here to mail-order houses, I almost imagined I had gone to the extreme in making a guess at the amount really expended; but I went out to prove the assertion, and it was many times worse than I ever imagined!

"That is why I urge this splendid, growing town to bestir itself for municipal interest. A promising future is possible; but not so unless there is that movement which means a struggle. Officers must be men who want to live here, who have big interests here and are interested in the growth of the industries as much as the population. Civic pride must follow on swift feet, a work which will need the co-operation of our women; and there must be rigid and systematic school discipline, for we have foreigners here, many of them, who can be made fine and

worthy citizens when once they adopt our customs as they do our country, each ready to be all American in manner, speech and dress. An ignorant tongue is not necessarily in an ignorant head, for who among us would do better with the same poverty of expression?

"It is an old, and a universal saying that the prosperity of the country—all the country—depends upon the quantity of produce raised on the farms. No other industry so seriously affects the business of the country as a crop failure. If the crops are generally good throughout the country, business feels its effect in every department of its industry. But should the crops fail in certain localities, both the farmer and the merchant feel the ill effects. The farmer because he cannot meet his obligations to the merchant; and the merchant because he will be obliged to *carry* the farmer until the farm yields a paying crop. As their interests are mutual, their business should be in harmony. The merchant always buys his produce from the farmer, and never for one moment thinks of sending out of town for his hay, grain or other rural produce necessities. But for some reason we have farmers right around us who do not follow the practice of reciprocity; but on the other hand, buy a great amount of household necessities in the large cities. This is an injustice, not only to the merchant but the farmer himself, as it reduces property values of the local town, and, in a very short time, will affect the farm values. It has ever been conceded that thriving farms are in the vicinity of prosperous towns or cities."

The editor had more and better ideas to present, more than space permitted. Having agitated the question, he was not at all surprised that several of their thinking citizens imbibed much of what had appeared in the paper, and set about to have a public meeting. But, strange to say, while they agitated it, brought speakers to

Garthage and even blazoned their advertisements to the entire country about, they did not include Coleen in a single performance of their duties.

It has been this way for all time, I suppose. The father of a thought does not have the opportunity to nurse his own children, or his children's children. In a sense it hurt Coleen to the quick. True, he had caused the town to investigate the impure water supply; but a member of the council strutted pompously about, proclaiming what he had done for sanitation; there had been a cleaning up day in Garthage and Coleen was perfectly content to give the different churches the credit, having gone to the ministers of each to have them agitate the movement. Where unsightly rubbish heaps were piled, the earth was clean, if not verdant; but grass would grow another year, and window boxes would flourish. The barren school yard would be made more attractive, all ugly signs and unnecessary advertising on fences, houses and outbuildings were fast disappearing; still—Coleen was the agitator, but somehow or other, someone else took the credit.

Not once had he really resented it; but when they agitated the public meeting, he wrote the following short squib:

"And now the dream has come true—a real agitation of spirited brotherhood for our mutual benefit. And who brought the fact home and nailed it in sight? Perhaps it was the same fellow who said he wrote *Snowbound,* and didn't; or it was the author of 'Curfew shall not ring tonight,' or else it isn't; but what difference does it make who made us sit up and think, so long as we really see? Let us then bow to Old Man Garthage, the highest exponent of our town, only a spirit, for his appearance in our midst."

When he read it, he said to himself: "Now that was a

fool thing to write. I acted as if there had been a taffy pulling and little Johnnie had not been invited."

But he went to the meeting, right up to one of the front seats. He listened, glad of the fresh ideas that came from lips eloquent with the warnings to all towns. He learned more and more and more of the very thing he had studied for years, and the astonishing facts fairly floored him.

Garthage was in danger! She was headed right for it. It was no idle dream, no bit of foolishness that these men were expounding to the throng of men, women and children. They knew the danger ahead. Farmers listened attentively, some scarcely moving, so wrapped up were they in what the speakers were saying. Cheer after cheer reverberated throughout the great hall. Men clapped their hands, women waved handkerchiefs, while the usual cat yodels responded from between boyish fingers; for where is the boy who won't shriek, if for no other purpose than that of making a noise? Above all floated the music of the Italian orchestra as a befitting part of their expressed sentiment.

A lull followed and to the utter astonishment of Coleen, the chairman of the meeting announced that Miss Natalie Neugart would sing "The Little Old Home Town."

Coleen had not thought of the girl. He looked in the direction of a slight commotion where people were making room for her to pass down the aisle. As she rose, a young man stepped forward, put a chair aside and smiled at her. She handed him several articles she had been carrying.

John Coleen looked at the man, a stranger, someone so different from the men of Garthage, the city bred fellow with the unmistakable stamp of high culture and that ease of the world that comes with certain indepen-

dence, the surety of anything, frequently backed by money to make it more assertive.

Coleen felt the hot blood spread over his whole body. Unquestionably the man was her escort, and a thousand furies, hurts that scar the very soul, touched the heart of the lonely editor.

He did not look at her. He could not! He felt himself slipping back, back into some fathomless depths. Then again he felt the touch of her lips as he had kissed her. To save his very soul he could not believe a kiss like his was wrong or unholy. He knew it was; but he could not tell just why, and he did not care to know.

The soft Italian music was well suited to the simple verses. She took herself seriously as any person could tell by the wealth of seriousness in the tender melody. It was the same voice that wooed a certain man in the woods; and it was the same voice now singing, close beside the bier of a dying love. But would it die? If only it could!

"Someone always loves you in the little old home town,
Someone always hopes that you'll make good—
There's always someone living in the little old home town,
Who'd be glad to help you if they could.
Someone always cares for you in the little old home town,
There's someone there that thinks you'll make a name—
Someone always misses you in the little old home town,
If you are a failure, why, they love you just the same.
There's someone always dear to you in the little old home town,
A sweetheart or a sister fond and true—
A father, mother, brother, friend, in the little old home town—
Somebody in that little town that really cares for you!"

Coleen had heard the song before; though never as he heard it then. He looked up at her as she turned slightly to give him a fleeting glance. Then it was he knew that song was just for himself. Swifter than all mechanical messages was the call of love that held her just out of reach of arms that ached to hold her. Madly in love, more than jealous, heartsick and disgusted, he returned to his room at the hotel. On the dresser was a telegram. He tore open the envelope and read.

"Our little darling died tonight. Come home. Julia."

He read it once, twice, a half dozen times. He forgot the melody singing in his heart "Somebody cares for you," for he thought only of his stricken wife, the sorrowing mother of his dear, dear little boy. Oh, God, what a way to live! With trembling lips and shaking hands, he mechanically selected a few clothes, threw them into his bag and left the hotel.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW BEGINNINGS.

THOSE of us whose principles are right may suffer reverses, even losses, will certainly make enemies, but in the long run will achieve decisive victory and, possibly, lasting good.

Coleen had returned to Garthage. The memory of that trip to the home of his wife was like a dream. What he had imagined was not fulfilled. There was something over everything like a perfect maze. True, the child was dead. Sorrowful memories would never be forgotten, though time alone would help to relieve the pang. Coleen felt the veneered politeness of his wife's relatives. Sorrow brings us strangely together for the time being. But the mother of the boy was the real sufferer. No words consoled her for the great loss. She was not alone with her husband who found himself in a false position, go where he would. The morning of his return home they dined alone. She did not eat, did not even pretend to. She sat across the table from him, her delicate chin resting in the palm of her left hand. Her elbow rested on the padded table, and her lovely face was torture-marked with the ravages of tears and lack of sleep.

What she wanted, he did not know. He did not ask her. He felt very sorry for her, but not the sorrow that love lends. He felt sorrier for himself, for she had robbed him of the boy's presence in a home he wanted to provide. Always had Julia been selfish. She was selfish with the dead. He could say nothing now and he meant to say nothing; but the silence was embarrassing.

"John," looking him right in the eyes, "what are we to do?"

"I don't understand you, Julia. Do about what?"

"I'm so terribly—alone. Do you want me now? I should have gone to you, John, but, well—I did not. I wanted to. You know I did. I want to go now. I just can't stay here now."

He looked over at her, the girl-wife pleading for her place in the world with him. To be tender was to be untrue. He had never been false to her in any respect. His word was his pledge to God; but to tell her he would take her with him, that he still wanted her, he could not and would not say it.

"Do you want me?" she asked.

He shook his head slowly. "Not now, Julia. You simply killed every particle of love I ever had for you. I'll take the best possible care of you, send you money, clothes, get you anything within my means; but I'm honest, I do not want you with me."

"Is it some other woman? Are you—are you—John, do you mean to tell me you love some other woman?"

"I did not mean to tell you, Julia. Now that you have said it, I may just as well admit it—it is another woman."

Coleen had once seen a she bear in an iron cage, furtively nosing the bars, showing its teeth, working every strong muscle of its tortured body to get to a man who played with her cub outside the cage. Hell had no fury equal to the mother who felt the misery of iron bars against her angry attack.

He thought of that bear as he looked at the dainty, beautiful, silent girl opposite him, the love between them, with no hope of saving it. Spare her he could not, for she had left no opportunity for it. He had

played fair with her all the years and the hurtful truth came not to hurt or wound, but as the honest feeling he had for her.

She quickly left the room.

On his way home he thought of the additional grief he had caused her at a time when she wanted love and sympathy. It was not resentment; but the same feeling came to him that he, too, had known times when her love and encouragement were all he needed, and she had held silently aloof at the time when he needed her most. Yes, sorry he was; but he would do the same thing again. He knew it was against every law divine. The church alone would urge him to keep to the holy ties; honest manhood urged it; everything directed him to take her and make the best of it; but Love that filled his heart for another woman, a heart that knew all the pangs of loneliness and defeat, was his victor. That Julia was the mother of his son was a solemn thing. He knew she was a kind and gentle mother. But he wondered just why he had ever loved her. Try as he would, he could not replace her in his heart, so he did not even try.

Several weeks later he spent an evening talking with Father Jarenski. To the noble old man he told all. He was one person he could trust. He had been a kind and silent listener, then he lifted his grand old head, smiled gently and even laid his withered hand upon the right hand of the editor.

"My son, earthly love puts divinity to rout. Everything in this world is a cheap signboard, remember that. All the consuming flames of religion won't help a man in trouble if he hasn't the moral sentiment that goes with religious intent. Men like you lose themselves in the big crowd. They pursue and often capture; but I have yet to know the man, any man,

who violated the laws of heaven who can truthfully say he is happy. We gain our contentment by being as good and true as divine love will make us. Men resist temptations at one time of the day only to adopt them at another time. Life is just one big temptation. If you have failed your God, don't be surprised that your young and beautiful wife has failed you. I honestly think you are at fault, that this new love is only an impulse. I'd never put aside the woman who gave birth to my son. There is no end to illusions. I never knew any man who violated his sacred duty who came out a better man for his effort. If it is artificial happiness you seek, you will forsake one to gain the other; but somehow or other, Mr. Coleen, you look like——a man!"

When Coleen listened to the aged priest, he felt there was something finer in his friend, than anything which he said. Men exert on each other a sort of occult power. It was true with these two men (for Coleen enjoyed the fruition of the priest's ripe years). He admired his fine thoughts and gentle sentiments. The priest frequently sought the society of Coleen, often to imbibe some of the younger man's energy and ambition which are so helpful to the aged. There was sure to be a hearty laugh, for Coleen was decidedly humorous at times, and to the priest it meant a clash of wit, often so original that both men added rich stores to the humorous nature each possessed. Strange to say they never discussed religion, at least in its broadest sense; though often they spoke of natural forces, natural power, laws, and inexhaustible subjects tending for moral uplift.

One afternoon the priest was calmer than usual. He came into the office, sat down and in a strange mood said, "if a man's friend had displeased him, not

to get angry with the friend, but sit down and consider it, then he would not rise with a burden, but a blessing."

"Then I'd give him a punch!" This from Charlie Holmes who was reading a proof sheet of his own advertisement.

"Then, possibly, you are the one who shot Mr. Coleen?" The twinkle in the old man's eyes was fun provoking.

"No, the other fellow beat me down here. I'll get him next time. Don't you think the air in here is much purer since he got this week's editorials out in the open?"

"He told you nothing but the truth, though I believe you have been one of his steadfast friends. Men should be intelligent and earnest. If not they have no controlling future interest before them. For my part it seems most remarkable what editors must write, every day and every day. I no more wonder why they occasionally slip a cog. I think Mr. Coleen wishes to write. Work is a rich estate; but we get tired and indifferent. It is difficult to double our power when everything goes wrong."

The priest remained a few minutes after the departure of Mr. Holmes.

"Have you ever learned who shot you that night?" he asked.

"No," said Coleen, surprised at the question. "Why?"

"Well, I know for a certainty that the search has gone on, but so far as I know the man has not been discovered. There has remained in my mind a disquietude, a vague fear, a feeling of terror, springing from our impossibility to discover him. If he is here in Garthage, he may make a second attack."

The priest had voiced a dormant feeling in Coleen,

without creating fresh alarm. There really was no cause for the first attack, why a second?

He turned to his desk, opened some mail and was busy reading it when the door opened softly and within its coarse rough wooden frame stood the very soul of Love—Natalie! An unfinished letter to his wife was in the typewriter!

"Was it wrong?" she asked, coming to him swiftly. "I had to come. I'm going away. I'm going back to school. I—I just wanted to say good bye, then go."

Like a little child who had wandered into a strange place and was lost, Coleen took her hand, led her back to the door; but turned, stood against the door as if to protect her from some outside foe, then spoke:

"You are not wrong, Natalie. It is I who have been the one who did the greatest wrong. I am very, very sorry. I am truly glad you are going to New York. You will meet many fine, good friends there. I don't know why it is that a man of my age should be so foolish about you; but, child, I won't wrong the heart of a little girl like you so,—"

"You said you loved me." The voice was pleading.

"And I do love you. But, Natalie, you have everything in the world to make you happy, a beautiful home, friends, money, everything that promises pleasure to a girl in your position. Love is all I crave right now. You women are not brought up with the idea of fighting, of striving, or suffering. I have had a hard year of it. I told you I am married. I lost my little boy since I last talked with you. You don't want me to promise love which I can't possibly give, at least not now. I was writing to my wife as you came in. I want her to come back to me."

"You love her?" Natalie asked in a whisper.

"God, no! I love you. But she is mine for time

and eternity. She needs me and I—it is all I can do. I am a man who has spent his happiest hours in dreaming. I wouldn't give back that short time I spent with you for an everlasting eternity in any kingdom; but that's no way to talk to you."

Outside they heard the monotonous grinding of car wheels, the rattle and bang of coal cars at the tipple. The day was gray and the world so unlovely. Coleen looked from the window on the opposite side of the room. He saw a bright pink house that jarred furiously against his ragged nerves. A dirty hillside formed the background. He hated everything.

How lamely he had stated facts to the girl. He knew he had made the very same blunder while talking with his wife. What he wanted to say he could not say; what he did say was not what he really meant. The quietness of the girl, standing with downcast eyes, tortured him unmercifully.

His eyes wandered from the narrow brim of the dainty hat which crowned her head, down to the sweet face beneath it. He reached out both hands and placed them on her shoulders. Forgetful of what he had just said, his arms slipped down over her slender yielding form, and the arms clasped her fiercely to him.

He reached back of him, turned the key in the lock, then placed the key in his pocket. Instantly he withdrew the key, unlocked the door and opened it wide.

He heard the soft patter of her little feet on the wooden stairs, growing fainter and fainter. He might see her if he went to the window. Instead, he returned to his desk, and with blurred vision looked down at the unfinished letter. He picked it up, tore it into shreds. He threw off his coat, glanced over some mail on his desk, with a prayer in his heart that he might some day look like a man and be a man!

He glanced at a manuscript, then an amused smile flitted over his face. The manuscript was written by no other than Natalie's father!

That week David Neugart read the following, the brief squibs he had written one evening while Natalie played and sang for him. Like the average person who sees his own sentiments in print, he read them cheerfully.

"The retail catalog houses do not buy the farmer's produce.

"They do not buy the farmer's stock and hogs.

"They do not help to educate the farmer's children.

"They do not pay any taxes in your community.

"They do not help support your schools, churches and charitable institutions.

"They do not encourage the farmer's boys, or young men in small cities to engage in business.

"They do not help to build your roads or care for your streets.

"They do not sell you as good a grade of goods as you can buy in your own home town.

"They do not show you goods before you pay for them.

"They do not deliver promptly the goods you buy from them.

"They do not advocate the building up of country towns.

"They do not oppose the centralization of business in the large cities.

"They do not, in return for the farmer consumer's trade, who buy their clothing, household goods, farm implements, etc., from them, buy the farmer's butter, eggs, cheese, grain or wood.

"They do not buy your grain, butter, cheese and stock from pictures and pay in advance the same as you do.

"They do not buy anything from the farmer or consumer from a picture.

"They do not spend one dollar with the farmer or consumer.

"They never spend one dollar with your local merchants.

"They do not furnish employment to a single resident of your community.

"They do not extend to you credit, the same as does the local merchant, when you are hard up.

"They do not sympathize with you when you have sickness in your family.

"They do not sympathize with you when your wife or children are taken from you.

"They do not care for anything or anybody, except for your money.

"They do not care for anything or anybody, except for themselves.

"They do not want to see your local merchant prosper in business.

"Do you ever see one dollar of their money?

"THEN WHAT IN CREATION DO WE WANT THEM FOR?"

CHAPTER IX

EXPECTING THE CHANGE OF TIDE

COLEEN had believed in all he said and predicted. If other men had found time to evolve a plan, a plan to bring the greatest necessity to a country, why not continue with his own. Each man has his chance. In the line of work he pursued, some men found objections. There was small chance for public demonstration other than mere words, his own words, and such comments as he found valuable for use. We always have the skeptical with us. Men seldom believe without seeing and the spirit of "It can't be done," held to many.

Coleen worked hard that winter to present his plans and views. At the same time he was in conference with several men who paid frequent business trips to Garthage. It was known that these men were usually with David Neugart, Charles Holmes and John Coleen. What their business was no person in Garthage knew. Several times a week Holmes and Coleen had gone to the Neugart home. True, Natalie was not there. When their business visitors called, they frequently were entertained at the Neugart home. Something was in the wind, though no person guessed just what it was. But it was evidently something important, for two of the men were financiers. Neugart was rich in land and money; Holmes had different places of business up and down the whole of the Ohio valley and manufacturing interests in Chicago. Garthage happened to be the home of his boyhood, also the home of his wife, each a country home which was swallowed up in the growth of Garthage to become town homes. It was unnecessary to make the

big plunge. He had fallen in with Coleen's idea at the start: To make a town to withstand the world, to live within its border and to be self sufficient, all powerful, a place worth while, not to desert, but to have and to hold. Ugly as was Garthage, it presented one of the handsomest landscapes in the Ohio valley. Mining interests had marred its beauty; but mining interests can't claim the earth, and it was unneccessary for a town to suffer as a result. While the mines were right in the very heart of Garthage, the chance for building the resident district to the north of Garthage, along a wonderful stretch of country, was indeed the finest in eastern Ohio.

Coleen did not discover who was his assailant on that memorable night when he fell as a result of the shot fired at his back. Had it been a dirk in the back, he would have thought of the foreigners in Garthage who stab at the back, the Italians; but Italians seldom use firearms. Another thing that convinced him was the fact that the priest never discovered the would be murderer. True, he would not have divulged the confession of his church members; but he was honest in saying that he knew nothing, could learn nothing, and was confident the man was not a foreigner.

Coleen did not think so himself. Something pointed strongly to another clew. Who shot him, Coleen did not know. In fact he never would know; but it was evident from what followed that the plot was hatched in the saloon where he had gone on different nights with the men comprising the town's schoolboard and council. Some man in that crowd hated him for his written attack concerning their unbusinesslike procedure. That hate had resulted in the shot fired, possibly not by the hands of the man who hated Coleen, "but money gets you anything." His surprises came gradually; for in

the first place the building in which he had his offices was sold and he had to move. He moved again from his humble rooms in the tailor's establishment. As soon as settled and prepared to continue business, something occurred to make him move. It wasn't his advertisers, surely, who were responsible. But he kept on the go.

At last he purchased a two room cottage. He furnished it and felt the reassurance that comes from having his own place of business. On the eleventh of January the building was burned to the ground. He collected his insurance, bought another cottage and began publishing his paper with the same zeal. He followed up his calamities. He discovered the purchasers of the different pieces of property he had occupied. It wasn't one man, it was several. Then, like an angry bull, he lowered his head, plunged ahead and meant to gore when the time came.

Garthage was slowly rising from her filth, and seeming neglect. She began with greater zest the following spring. Women took ready hold and Garthage blossomed forth in a most astonishing and gratifying manner.

It was pleasing to Coleen to know that his friends, and he made many of them, were men and women worth while. They were among the intellectual persons of Garthage. He was welcome in homes of wealth and culture. He finally moved his office to a more protected place, rooms in the great railway building, and from that time on, he met with no disaster.

Several times he thought of leaving. He hated a quitter. Then he knew just why he was in Garthage and it was worth waiting to get. Get it? He had no possible chance of loss. And when he did get it, he meant to make some people dance. He was powerless

as it was; but the time was coming when opportunities would keep him remarkably busy!

Women!

Well, what does any man know of women. How can any man hope to please thousands of them when the average man has a difficult time pleasing just one?

But woman is a part of the great plan, even down to a man's legal papers, provided she is his wife, and Coleen needed nothing so much as his wife's name on several papers to complete his business plans.

Coleen, with papers in his pocket, his traveling bag near the door of his office, was meditating on this very point, while glancing idly over a railroad time-table.

His meditations were cut short by the appearance of Charlie Holmes. Holmes looked down at the traveling bag, then at the faultlessly attired editor.

"Onward Christian Soldier," he sang. "Now where the diddo are you going? From the expression on your face, you'd make a fellow think you were going out to assassinate your dear old grandmother."

"I'm going to Pittsburg to see my wife. There, you have my explanation. I didn't hear your car stop. How'd you get down here?"

"Car? Oh, the devil on that car. I cranked it up this morning and the thing flew over in the woods. I don't know whether it lit in a tree or in a frog pond, haven't been over to see; but, say, I guess we can pull off that deal this week. If we don't, some tragedy to your uncle Charlie. But—say, Coleen, I never knew you had a wife."

"As there are about ten million men who do not know it, I'm not a bit surprised that you did not know it. To tell you the truth, Holmes, I haven't a wife. My honorable father-in-law has her. I just happen to be that old man's paralytic stroke in this world. Yes,

I have a wife, a sweet, beautiful girl. She couldn't live in this place—I would not ask her to come here, you know. I'm going up to have her sign these papers. I may bring her back with me for a few weeks. I hope to."

As he mentioned her in the affectionate terms he had used all the time, there came again the craving for her, wanting her as the irresistible necessity in his life. Would she come? Yes, probably!

Coleen frequently thought of another woman, a girlish creature singing her way into the hearts of men and women. Now she was nothing but a memory of tenderness, something of a prayer he had heard, or the soft reverberation of holy music. Not for world upon world or all the inducements that such worlds could offer, would he ever again tempt himself or the little girl into anything so base in God's sight as that real but artificial love. Real in his heart; but made artificial by the ties of wedlock. When he thought that he was going to see his wife, it worried him, pleased him, annoyed him, while driving into his brain the resolve to take her back into his life and be happy with her. Love remained in his heart for her.

That man never lived who lost a certain tenderness he has enjoyed with a woman he has loved and who has been the mother of his child. Cold and indifference often fill their hearts, love and joy burn to white ashes; but always is there a little burning spark under the white ashes which, if revived, will burst into flame. We can hate those we love; but we can't love those we hate first.

Both men looked in the direction of the door, having heard some person ascending the steps. Outside the footsteps halted. Then Sonia stepped quietly into the office.

Sonia's homely face was tender in a pathetic way. Her wonderful eyes, tenderly deep and dark like some exotic flowers, would beautify the ugliest face. Timidly she glanced at the men, then gave a startled look at the walls, ceiling and floor of the room. She stepped quickly backward through the door, when Coleen called her.

"What do you want, Sonia?"

The gentleness of his voice reassured the shrinking nature. She came back into the office and walked up to his desk.

"It is no need to ask you, for I never see so clean a offess, Mr. Coleen. What I want was work—you know to clean, to scrub, to make the win'ows bright, you know. Oh, how beautiful you have it clean. I want money. I have a little babee, don't you know. My man's—he—he got killed. I must do everything, don't you know. And now I got no money—oh, my poor little babee— Who cleans your offess?"

"Mrs. Taylor has done the work for me, Sonia. No, I need no person. I'm sorry; but you know Mrs. Taylor is a widow too and she has five children. She does the work nicely. I should think you could get plenty of offices to clean. I don't see many clean ones here. Have you tried?"

"Yes." she answered quietly; "some say 'not today' others, 'get out, you damned hunky,' and lots of men say—say—oh, I could not tell you what they say —those bad, bad men."

Her small dark hand reached for a tiny gold cross on a chain that swung over the maternal bosom of the "damned little hunky" whose faith in her Savior gave her the mother love strength to hunt work for herself to care for the fatherless babe.

Coleen understood. Dear God, how well he did understand, but the condition is the same over the whole

wide world. It occurred to him at the moment that The One who notes the sparrow's fall, sometimes forgets the little women on His earth.

Sonia had reached the door. Holmes followed her. "Sonia," he said, "go clean my office. It is not very dirty; but you can clean it nicely, I know. Here is some money." Without looking at what he handed her, he drew some money from his pocket and put it into her hand. "Only, you must not move the pianos, Sonia. When I want to exercise them, I put them out in pasture." He laughed happily. "You'll find dust cloths in a bag on the closet door. I'll see you again."

Coleen had watched the performance, the spontaneous outburst of human sympathy which gives every man renewed faith in mankind. After all God does look after the widows! It wasn't necessary to take a gilt-edged Bible and trot off to some church to follow the right mandates and precepts which are expected of us. Coleen's hand covered some money in his pocket. The time had come and gone to do the same thing. He had witnessed the Christlike act of a man paying honorable tribute to a dead man's wife and child.

CHAPTER X

FOR HONOR'S SAKE

WHEN Coleen saw his wife that evening at the hotel, where he had wired her to meet him, stating it was for business, he was mildly surprised that she came at all. He really expected it would be necessary to call at her home, a place he did not care to visit.

It was night and the softened blue light in the room made her extremely pale. She looked ill and seemed very glad to take the chair he placed for her.

Her feeling of resentment occasioned on the day he had spoken so rudely to her, after the funeral of their child, was forgotten. What took its place she did not know. Whatever that death had meant to one had been the same to the other. There is a binding tie in death as there is in wedlock, something to be unbroken, unforgotten.

Her dainty attire attracted him. Always had she pleased his eye, as beautiful women all play that important part, whether they break the heart while pleasing the eye, does not seem to matter. At any rate, he thought only of her.

He took the papers from his pocket, drew his chair beside hers, placed the papers in her lap.

"Julia," he whispered, "let business go just now. I would have come anyhow! I have wanted you, and I do know you want me."

The papers slipped to the floor.

There is a quietness more eloquent than words. Coleen wrote his ideas. He was silent most of the time, as are most deep thinkers. To him it was a relief that

Julia understood the words he could not speak. He had not lived with her all the years they had been together, for her to forget that one trait.

"We have both suffered, John," she said, running her hands through his hair, in the same old caress, with the tips of her fingers playing their light tatoo on both temples, that trick a woman has of caressing the man she loves, or playing with a child. "But, John, it was my fault, always my fault. I know it now. But I had to learn it, so—"

"No, Julia, it was my own fault. It was only your fault because you had not learned your duty to me. I used to tell you that we could get along better by ourselves, that I felt when I married you I had the perfect right to ask you to please me. I was wrong too; for you had not been raised that way. It was not taught you, so I got angry. I was in the wrong."

"I think we were both in the wrong, perhaps; but, John, the fault was mine." She added this with a whimsical smile. "I had father and aunt Judie to back me in every foolish act. May be I had brains, I do not know; but I never used them. I don't believe I ever thought what I was to you or what was my duty to you. You were not wealthy like father, and that did make a difference. When father supplied what you could not, I wondered why you did not and—"

"Say we don't talk about it. We can make it up. I can make it up financially in a few years, perhaps. I really do not know. I came expressly to get you, if you will to go back with me; but I can't promise you city life there, only I am in a fair position to get some money soon, very soon, after which the money will make money for us."

"What is it?" she asked.

"It's all a secret just now; but I know enough to real-

ize the outcome. You see I have that farm down there that used to belong to my grandfather. You know I paid the taxes on it after mother owned it, then, of course, I got it at her death. I heard there was a tremendous oil boom down there and that is what took me there. I went down, but oil seems to follow a certain lay of the land. A creek joins the Ohio River near my place and, of course, it was my luck not to be on the right side of the creek, though only a nasty, dirty, copper-colored creek separates my land from one of the dandiest oil fields in Ohio. I have several hundred acres, and a small tract of good timber; but it did not promise very well until lately. I was over in West Virginia about six months ago at a hotel. It was there I met some men I know who are interested in steel and iron. They wanted a site along the Ohio River. I knew I had it, and what was more to my advantage and theirs too, is the fact that my land, while lying near the river, is above the flood line. That alone makes it valuable. To the right and left of me is some of the finest country you ever saw in all your life, a magnificent site for a thriving city, with plenty of territory for its growth. Garthage is right on one end of it, so you see the possibility of making a city out of it. I couldn't go ahead with my plans unless I could interest others to go in with me, so I told the men my plans and had them visit me. Are you interested?" He asked eagerly. "You don't seem interested."

"Certainly. Certainly, John. What did they do?"

"Well, before they came I saw a dandy good friend of mine there, a Mr. Holmes who owns some land not adjoining mine exactly, so he bought the connecting farm, only several acres; but enough to block us out, if the other fellows would not come in. Then we went to a rich farmer who lives about two miles away and

whose land almost joined mine on the west side, and he bought the farms to my left, leaving the whole of that site to three of us. But I have the best lay of land for the mills; Holmes has a fine place for factories, adjoining Garthage; while Mr. Neugart takes the prize for a residence district.

"I have to sell to get the men to take the location, the others can lease; but I was not so fortunate as that. Still, I don't have to sell all of the farm, and I have something up my sleeve for the rear of the place."

"Are you quite sure the men will take it?" Julia inquired. "You know I know absolutely nothing concerning business. I simply can't understand it."

"Not many women do. But this is as simple as can be. Take it? Of course they take it. I'll want you to go with me tomorrow to sign these papers, then, Julia, we can begin to live, can't we?"

He threw his arms around her. Never had his lips been so thirsty for a kiss. He wanted her to kiss him. Instead she looked away from him.

"And if I sign these papers, and you get a whole lot of money, why, why you can leave me and marry that woman you told me you loved? I guess I'll not put my name on any paper, not yet, John."

"Oh, you will!"

Coleen looked at his watch.

"Julia, we are to dine now. We will have a little old love feast, won't we? But don't, don't say 'other woman' to me again as long as you live. I'm home, or here in Pittsburg, for honor's sake. Sign or don't sign; but just keep this in mind—I want you whether I complete my plans or not. I do want to complete them, of course; for once I get in power, I can pay off some old debts. I owe some. And they are not debts of money, but other kinds. I haven't seen the other woman

for the Lord knows how long. I've gone straight, you bet on that! There is the dearest old priest I ever met who comes to my office, and that old fellow has taught me how to put new strings on my old harp. Oh, you'll like him. He is a man among men, old Father Jarenski. And you'll like Holmes and his wife and kids. Julia, for the Lord's sake look happy. I feel as if I had just been released from prison and my name had come back to me, after being numbered for years!"

"Forgive me," she said, nestling closer to him. "Oh, John, John, John, you've been away, not here; but I was just wishing our little boy had lived to be here. I—I—"

He understood, but hastened to quiet her. He hated tears.

"Julia, I have felt the same ever since I saw you," he answered. "But, Dearie, if that little fellow knew how happy we were just now, I guess he would be very glad. Let's think that. Now we are going to have dinner, you know, and you can order the things I like. Forgotten?"

"No, I remember." She picked up the papers. "Put them safely away, John. I'll sign them tomorrow."

Prison bars are not the worst prisons in life. It is the soul of a man or a woman fettered with life's trials and tribulations, this going through life with the heavy ball and chain weighing down every rising hope. To be free. To be free!

The turnkey of Fate had ordered the release of just two such prisoners.

At that moment a sweet and beautiful girl attired in an evening gown, sat at her window, looking out on the great metropolis. Despite her success, her friends, her acquaintances, she was lonely, and she wanted Coleen!

CHAPTER XI

A NEW SENSATION

COLEEN had drifted into Garthage to make friends and enemies. At times he imagined he made only the worst possible foes. It was a great and most flattering feeling that surged through his heart when he realized the kindly feeling the people of Garthage felt for his wife. Never had a woman so surprised him as did his own wife. The surprise, aloofness, and strangeness he expected (and he certainly shuddered with the thought), he never discovered. She may have felt very lonely and decidedly strange; but she entered into his life, knowing that what was his environment must be hers. Gracious, kind, sympathetic, dormant traits of her girlhood seemed to spring into life. How proud he was that he could be proud of her. How self satisfied was the feeling that she did him honor wherever she went. Not once had she stared rudely at the poorly clad, miserable children of French town. She pitied them. Years had come when every child was some mother's child to Julia. She saw where things could be done to entertain the hopelessly unhappy in uninteresting Garthage. She would, when she could, plan many joyful things in her church. She hoped to help in the school. She visited the sick. She had come into her own kingdom of noble womanhood.

One day at dinner (they now owned their own home), she had been talking of the new mills that were soon to be built on the old farm site, and said:

"John, I was never very deeply interested in your far flung ideas of healing sore towns and trying to create unity and the like, because I was taught not to;

but somehow or other, I just can't help getting right up on a platform and telling these business men how to get trade. I don't know a single thing, only my woman's instinct seems to tell me wherein they are so terribly wrong."

"If you can't tell them, then tell me. It's a mighty dangerous thing to let anything original loose around me. May be I can give it to them alive in the paper, you know."

"And John Dear, if you are going to print some of my suggestions in your paper, do tell them in your own forceful way, that all merchants, whether in Garthage or in any other town, should endeavor to make more effort to please the women than they do at present.

"Being the product of a larger city myself, and having always lived in one until I came here, I realize how much more the merchant of the large city 'goes after' his trade.

"To wait until customers decide that they actually need something is poor business, and does not tend to bring in the dollars very fast.

"The merchant must create the need for things that he wants to sell! ! Then first of all he must have a clean store with bright shiny windows through which his customers can see. This does not cost him any money. The manufacturers whose goods he carries are only too anxious and willing to make a good window display for him; first one, and then another, until people begin to look for something new from time to time, and watch for its appearance.

"Tell them, John, that eighty per cent of the BUYERS of this big country of ours are women! The other twenty per cent are the men who buy for their businesses. Women are attracted by good looking store windows, and it is needless to say that after looking into the

windows, it is quite natural that they will want to know what is inside.

"Here again the store-keeper can make the dollars come to him much more quickly, if he will take an interest in his business.

"If a woman goes into a store (or a man too, for that matter), and the proprietor or one of his 'trained' clerks (because every man who keeps a store should 'train' his helpers), approaches her with a pleasant greeting and the desire to be of service to her, she is immediately complimented by his attention, and his store looks attractive to her at once. If his goods are placed to attract her interest and his store is clean, and she can get *SERVICE* right at home, that same woman would never think of sending out of town for what she wants. He will have her trade always.

"I have gone into stores again and again here, and asked for something which they did not happen to have. Perhaps they never kept it. Not once has one of our merchants said to me, 'that he would try and get it for me, as soon as he could, if I would be willing to wait!' Who is to blame in such a case, the buyer or the seller? Is it any wonder that women (who are the greatest offenders by sending away from home for what they think they want, or think they can get cheaper) will patronize some mail-order house, when the local merchant is so very indifferent?

"Would the merchant in the large city let such a thing go unnoticed?? Never!!

"There the clerk is instructed that if they are 'out of the article' (even if they have never kept it), to take your name and address and send it to you as soon as he can possibly. This is the same, whether you are a stranger to him or one of the regular customers.

"As it saves you the trouble of looking around yourself,

you appreciate the attention, and next time you want anything, you go back to that store, and perhaps keep on going and become a 'regular' customer. That merchant is bound to please you and is responsible for the goods that he sells.

"The great trouble with the merchant of the small town is, that he has allowed himself to get into a rut. He just hates to make the effort to pull himself out, because it is such a hard pull for a little distance. Consequently, he gets rustier and rustier and the good looking catalog with the attractive pictures takes the place that he should have in his community.

"People who buy from mail-order houses do not realize that they do not handle the nationally advertised articles. If they do, they are not 'pushed' in their catalogs, and only occupy inconspicuous places, while the goods on which they make the largest profit have the largest picture space. The innocent buyer does not know this, and he thinks the article must be very superior, because it is so well written up.

"Every merchant in every small town (even the man who keeps the general store in the farming community), can do just as much for his customers as the mail-order house, a hundred or two or three hundred miles away. But he must 'coax' his customers back to him, after they have once left him, and return 'good for evil.'

"In the large cities all the stores have 'Schools' for their clerks and salespeople. In these schools they learn just 'how to sell' and what to do to please their customers, because the owners of these tremendous places of business never come in contact with their customers. The competition is so great that nothing is left undone to attract the customers into their stores.

"All kinds of clever advertising is resorted to, and the cleverest methods of selling. Accommodations of all

kinds, such as rest rooms, stationary, wrapping of parcels, mailing stations, etc., are given customers free of charge.

"The country merchant who wants to compete with the mail-order house must 'sit up and take notice,' or else he will soon find himself without a business of any kind. He must advertise! Not like the city merchant, but by having the most attractive store in his town. He must get the story of his business before his customers in some way.

"He must not only welcome people who come to his store, but he must help them buy. Oftentimes people do not know just what they want, or if they cannot get what they have come for, they leave without making any purchases, while if the merchant or his clerk would suggest something which might do quite as well, they would not only buy it, but other things as well.

"I am only a woman, but it is the women who buy everything for the home and the family, and they should be highly considered by the merchant who wants to increase his business and the business of his town. Women would never have resorted to mail-order buying if the local merchants had been awake to their opportunities. If they do not begin to realize the danger now, it will soon be too late.

"If the women in all the women's clubs in the smaller towns of this country were aware of the conditions that exist in their towns, there would soon be a change, because when women go after things they usually get them.

"What I have said seems harsh, but the merchants can be the very greatest factors to bring brightness and cleanliness into the lives of the dirty and unkempt people who come to buy from them. A few do make the effort, but you can count them on the fingers of one hand. The most of them do not seem to have the ambition to make any

greater effort than their competitors. I declare that I do not know whatever they aim to do."

"And you will never know," he replied. "Julia, I don't think they are ever going to light until something pulls the pegs from under them, and I'm the fellow that is going to do it, just as sure as I live. I've got my hold, believe me, and I'll hold on with bulldog tenacity until everyone of them calls a halt. They knocked me down and kicked me when I was down, and I haven't forgotten it! But back on that farm of mine I'll give them all the competition they want, and I'm ready to begin it right now. I have planned the dandiest little layout over there that can be imagined, but, of course Holmes and Neugart are backing me. I'll make this town better or you bet it has to be the cabbage patch after this year. I started out to do it and I will. I'm like the electric light company here—they'll damn me if I do or don't, so Johnnie is going to play his hand."

"And I'll stop the soap order ladies," Julia laughed mischieviously. "Or, perhaps, you'd like me to be one of the fifty or sixty soap order agents we have here?"

"I know something about it, of course, though not very much. Do they bother you?"

"The soap order clubs are one of the many foes in Garthage," explained Julia. "No, I cannot say the women bother me; but I do explain to many of them the error of doing this work, how it is sure to suppress business here, and I have pointed out to them the cheap, miserable returns for their labor. I do believe no class of women is so universally despised as soap agents. They came in droves in Pittsburg, until I hated the sight of one of them."

"But soap is a cheap article, not much damage done with that, is there?"

"It gives a woman, any woman, the desire to get

something for nothing. Just as you say in your editorials, it furnishes the wrong doctrine. In the first place they bother people and often get orders through sympathy or just to get rid of them. They work harder at the job than one of them would at any other trade in the town. They would meet with far less vexations were they to do sewing or even the most menial work Garthage or any other town has to offer."

"What do they get for their orders, money?"

"Money? Of course not! Maybe a chair that is shoddy, a baby cart that isn't what it is represented to be, or a pair of those cheap imitation Nottingham curtains. They get something less than nothing. Maybe they are satisfied, I sincerely hope they are; but, John, candidly, I don't think there is anything on earth so extremely undesirable in a woman's house as trash or enlarged pictures. I do wish these poor souls could see in some homes and—why, here is Father Jarenski, just in time to dine with us. But you must, indeed you must!" and Julia hastened to make a place for him at her tiny table.

"I was just telling Mr. Coleen something of our soap order fiends in this town, how foolish it is for women to follow it up. I wonder why women do those things so blindly?"

The priest looked at the bright, animated woman at his right, then at the bouquet of white flowers and miniature green ferns that graced the center of the table.

"I believe you are one of the women who expect fruit and not flowers. The older I get the more lenient I am with persons who have lived under great and severe conditions. You cannot expect the unenlightened to think as do those who have lived different lives. Now I do not believe in women soliciting soap orders or buying from strangers in far distant cities, none of that,

simply because I know the mistake they make. But I think that so long as they do not know, they are to be pitied and informed."

"Informed is correct," smiled Julia. "I used to think it the biggest piece of nonsense to preach this stuff to the general public; but, honestly, the public, even in the great cities, is anything but well informed."

"It makes a great difference, my dear young woman, what we think and do, as well as what we are or may be. We need to measure up to our citizenship as much as to our Master's ideal and purpose for us. In my position I pray ever to be able to give to those who turn to us with their emptiness, their hunger, their sorrow. You are in a better position to point out material conditions."

"I don't believe that, Father Jarenski," laughed the happy listener. She disliked him to be too sober of thought. "It is your duty to preach soap and not soap just as much as it is mine or John's or any other person's. You could preach the use of soap to those poor bewildered Polish people, to the women of French town; and goodness knows to many of these outside districts where people just exist. Do they want to live, these foreigners, or just exist and get back to their country? Think of how they could live if they cared for themselves, their homes, their children! How can they have bright, fresh, healthy thoughts when they live in the ramshakle homes they have and do not aspire to anything?"

"Mrs. Coleen," answered the priest, placing his fork carefully on his plate. "Do not be offended if I say that you are not wholly acquainted with their different lives. You see only the ugly surface. I do not know very much myself, you know; but I speak these different languages. I get at the hearts of these people.

I, too, know that many of them have more today than ever before; others have less. True, they speak a foreign tongue; but you would, indeed, be surprised did you know how many splendidly educated men there are among these miners, men fitted for better positions, only hampered by the want and need of money so necessary to further their purpose. I know this. Our first foreign arrivals are difficult to teach and often so poor, so ignorant, so bowed down with great burdens, that even an existence is all they crave. I can't do much with them, try as I will; but the younger generations learn too rapidly. Remember America is not a nation of American-born people. It is made up of foreigners! And foreign born people are your leaders. Don't think we fail to advise; but, dear child, the hardest day's work a man has to do, is to tell others how to live and get them to do it. Isn't that true, John?"

"I got shot for it," laughed John. "But Father Jarenski, you don't want to dampen Julia's ardor now; for we had an awful tussle of ideas on this subject before our ideas dared collaborate. She was a member of let the fittest survive. Now she wants to kill off the mail order traffic too and annihilate the soap order ladies! But, bless her heart, she is going to do one thing fine and good. She is going to bring Sonia here and give her and the baby a nice, clean, respectable home. Sonia can learn a lot here. She is bright."

"Now you have the idea. I wanted to say it, but feared to; but don't you know that the very reason that so many foreigners do not live differently is because they know of nothing different. They see nothing else. Not one of the better women in Garthage would take a foreign woman into her home on a social equality. They hire them! Say what you will, you can't make a

high stepper out of a beaten dray horse. You can't do it. At least not when some are working under the yoke of American made servitude."

"Maybe my plan will work in the new Garthage," explained Coleen. "Of course the work must go slow for awhile. But you know as well as I that these mines are going to shut down. They don't agree, the operators and the miners, and just as sure as you live, you will see at least half of our people here without labor before snow falls, mark that. It means they must scatter like so many lost sheep; and the companies will not carry them through strikes or even permit them to live in those miserable shacks. I hope that we can have some houses ready by that time to receive some families, for there will be an abundance of work for the men. I don't propose to have those workmen's homes planted down in nasty, dirty, muddy holes, with only cinder paths leading to civilization. There will be decent, respectable buildings, not all of one design, and it is our purpose to give to all persons the opportunity to purchase the houses, provided they do certain things to prove their worth. We can help the workmen if they help themselves. And, Father Jarenski, if I can get the interpreters I want and need to copy my stuff, I can get the idea to them before it is everlastingly too late. We have to have the working men with us and it is our duty to help them to become worthy citizens, and I am like you, I do not believe they can do it, living as they now live."

The pleased look that came into the old man's face showed his approval. "What then?" he inquired eagerly.

"Well, for one thing we will have stores, offices, public buildings, and one of our first buildings is to be a community building, very much on the order of

one they have over in Washington, Pa., and we shall have a man hired for the express purpose of seeing that every place is carried out systematically. You can't make a town without system. You can put one man in to engineer the work intelligently, with the aid of his co-workers, then we can hope for something definite. After a while we want a small theatre, and that strip on my farm that widens at the back with the rise of Laurel Hill can, in the future, be made into a small but very fine park, leaving much of it in its natural beauty. It's too bad the wide part did not face the river—I'd be rich enough to go ahead with my plans; but you know my land narrowed there. At any rate we can get the street car franchise, and the steel companies erect their own railroad to the main line. Everything is coming our way. I intend to fight the bitter foe, the mail-order traffic, and fight like all possessed to suppress it. If it gets a start over there," pointing in the direction of the city-to-be, "we may just as well build right on a volcano."

"It is wonderful," answered the listening old man. "May God give me the years to see the fulfillment of your noble plan. My people, oh, my poor down-trodden people! Their lives will be transformed into the grace and beauty of Christ, and the weary ones will see hope and have new faith in God."

"I hope so," was John's simple reply.

"All men are not in the pulpit who teach holy faith," replied the faithful one. "Will you prepare an article which you want printed? I know a splendid young man who is finely educated who will interpret for you, and we can send copies to the different papers which our people read. This, and only this, is the way to reach them. They live to read their papers. It is their only touch of the life they love best. Yes, yes, why of

course that is the way. Coleen, you are a smart man."

"No, I am not. I'm human, that's all."

"Yes," was said so softly by the old man that the single word was in itself a sort of benediction to the one man in Garthage who believed in the work he was doing.

CHAPTER XII

BIG STEEL PLANT

WINTER with its bleakness crept into the mining valley and hunger, lean like a nursing she wolf, murderous in need, white-fanged and blood-thirsty, prowled unmercifully among the unemployed. The strike was indeed a strike, falling with the impact of an iron sledge on the shoulders of men who asked nothing better than to go into the dark, dangerous underground, there to dig away at the hard coal until their cars were filled for the day. It was a sad case of wanting to just fill coal cars, nothing else. It was, in reality, the only work some of them could do. With faces clean, or shirt sleeves thrust back, exposing sinewy, hairy arms, the skin was bleached to a whiteness which showed that little or no sunshine had touched them the summer through! And the companies ordered these men from the houses.

Where small gardens had grown during the summer (for all foreigners have a small garden when possible), only bleak yards of frost-bitten weeds and ugly corn-stalks confronted them; then came the storm, the ice, snow and freezing weather. Miners and operators fought. Operators sat in leather-cushioned seats in fine hotels—miners huddled in wretched homes or saloons. Better far was it for the miners to be at work. Time to them meant food and shelter. The northern lakes were coal-bound with acres and acres of coal ready for market. Operators could afford to wait. Blind, and stubborn to their own good, the miners contended for the few extra cents. They lost when they gained a

point, as does every working man who doesn't follow the man with the money. Deny it if you dare.

Hungry mothers gave birth to babes who dared to live. Sickness brought the mine physician who, thanks to his benevolent heart and good pay, was helpful to them. The union paid him or he might have refused many calls. He dare not do so.

In the midst of financial depression, discontent, sickness, death, destruction of property, quarrels, murders, drunken rows, came this clarion blast from Coleen's paper.

"Citizens' meeting gave encouragement to the proposed enterprise by subscribing stock.

"A large meeting of citizens was held at Garthage Monday night to encourage the building of a steel plant costing one million dollars. The project is backed by West Virginia capitalists. Many of those present pledged to take stock in the concern.

"The impression seems to prevail that on account of the splendid coal deposits and the good shipping facilities, that the mill owners have practically decided to locate this mill on a farm adjoining town, that strip of ground known as 'Dilly's Peninsula,' and owned by John Coleen, editor of this paper.

"While it is generally conceded that much of this business is a transaction between Messrs. Neugart, Holmes, Coleen and others; yet some of our leading capitalists propose building a finer and larger electric plant and it is also expected that the gas companies operating across the creek will merge with the big plan which will begin work at the earliest possible moment.

"It is fortunate that the proposed site is promising for the steel plant, inasmuch as it is out of the flood district, and the river and railroad shipping facilities are the very best. To be honest, it is not a dream or

a false hope; for we can expect this to materialize which will be in the nick of time for many working men throughout the Ohio valley."

* * * * *

Interpreted as it was in the different languages and printed in foreign papers, published in America, it sent a ray of hope to a half-starved Garthage. It takes but little hope to put new zest into a man or a woman. At best the most of us live on hope and at times realize its fruition.

Spring came slowly that year. It hung back with many a sob and backward step. Men defaced the earth where busy laborers no longer could wait the fickle favors of good weather. Ugly shacks to accommodate workmen were rudely erected. Haulers of wood and drawers of water splashed in mud with millionaires. Miles of steel railway, tons and tons of steel, iron, wood and wire were dumped into the debris and, owing to system, found place at the quickest possible moment.

And John Coleen was their systematizer. It was Coleen who made a business of system. He preached it, prayed it, wrote and printed it; but more than that, he put on hunting boots and waded into it. He was on the ground floor. He was not the unkind task-master which every man feared. He was the cautious, careful, businesslike man who had to be obeyed.

His first order of system was to discharge one of his foremen for reading a newspaper while on duty. Coleen saw him reading and told him he need not work that afternoon.

"Why not?" asked the foreman, removing his cigar, ready for any discussion.

"Because you must read the paper," replied the busy man. "I want you to read it. Get out of it all you can. But you are no earthly good to us if you don't work

for us; so when you finish your paper, come back to work tomorrow, or leave."

And the man left. But the story remained; and men who wanted work, who came there to work, jumped at the sight of a newspaper.

The wearied men whose lives heretofore had meant only the darkness and depression of the coal mine took to the new work with new energy, revitalized ambition and revived hope. The destitute wives who had passed through the starvation time with the little provided, only God and the labor unions knew how, sang again with the pleasing knowledge of cupboards replete with food.

With remarkable rapidity, despite the weather, the steel plant grew from its strong foundation into a steel skeleton of enormous proportion. In all its nudity, openness, barrenness, it represented almost a prayer shrine to the working men who toiled on the structure for daily wage. Then came its final touches and lastly the end of the contractors' job when every office was swept clean and the workmen turned to fresh duties.

No man watched the work with keener interest than did the Polish priest. No person knew that in the depths of his noble heart many misgivings had come and gone the past winter. His heart was seared with the apparent futility of prayer. He was a man among men at times, still full of that grit and determination which finds some of its zeal in muscular strength. He knew the dignity of labor and its ever present need, though he wondered time and time again, that work was not more proportionate to the ones who did it. Either the burden was too heavy or it was entirely lacking. He had seen women, poorly clad, unshod, bowing their backs to carry home the heavy bags of coal which they had picked along the track. And some

of these women had been prosecuted for the tiny theft. It was the same pitiful story each time—to keep from freezing! He had seen one strong man refuse wages in the mine at a certain rate, then take some laborer's job for a dollar a day, while refusing his own and taking another man's job! But why he did it was just another howl from the misty past when animals locked horns in the wilderness of the misty era of our first beginning the eternal fight for supremacy which has only changed in its plans and ferocity with greater cunning and less labor.

When the priest prayed, he often wondered why he did. When he saw at last the steel mill in its state of usefulness, he looked above its towering heights to a place far, far beyond the mundane sphere of earthly things and he thanked God with all the fervor of his soul for what He had done through John Coleen.

And he told John Coleen to celebrate. And that was not the least original, for it was the editor's intention to have one rousing jubilee at the beginning of Garthage's rejuvenation.

Coleen almost refused to celebrate the new industries in the town proper, preferring it on his own ground, but he finally relented. In his heart he really wondered if anything could be done for Garthage, the Garthage which received him, revived itself for a time, then fell shattered as if every support beneath it had crumbled with dry rot. To boost it, he would not. Still there was material in the town he must use. It was not the location he needed or its old houses or warehouses. There were brains, brawn, mentality, help among some of the good people. The only fault had been their own. They never tried to make Garthage other than a camping place. They never saw beneath the rich surface the wealth hidden from human eyes. They saw only the

filth, dirt, grime, the yawning mouth of a black serpentine. Something seemingly crawling back into the earth that meant death to the laborers. Those who could chase the elusive dollars did so with astonishing alertness or else satisfied themselves with what they received. Ambition was not totally lacking; but there were far more leaners than lifters in Garthage, that stagnation which actually thrives under pitiful illusions, unlovely surroundings deadening sameness.

Garthage could be made a fine town commercially and industrially. It was a fine trade center. It needed energy and enterprise. And, for the first time in its history it had what they could proudly claim as a genuine Board of Trade, now ready, as the paper stated, with facts, figures and pictures for its active operations. It was from them the following invitation was sent broadcast.

"The Garthage Board of Trade, representing the commerce and industry of the city, extends a cordial invitation to investor and homeseeker to come here and prosper, and to our visitors and auto tourists a hearty welcome to tarry with us and enjoy the many good things we have to offer. May 23, 19....."

Jollification 8 P.M. John Coleen,
President.

Charles E. Holmes,
Secretary-treasurer.

They came, some in automobiles which were new and sensational contrivances at that time; others traveled in the ever ready family surrey with its hearselike fringe bobbing to the breeze, or they walked. Every available tree, post or fence that made a suitable hitching post held captive the ox, the ass, and the kids' Shetland ponies, but they came; for Garthage promised pleasure with business and a lot of prizes for those

who held lucky numbers. The bait was truly inviting. And why not come?

The affair was attended by thousands, far more than the Board of Trade hoped to be preesent. Possibly it was the fine weather, after a long and dreary season, which cajoled most persons from home. Splendid as was the meeting, not one thinking man or woman got away from the plain, simple, forceful speech made by John Coleen. He was not, in the real sense, an orator. He lacked the quality which makes a speaker, that peculiar something which is born with the elocutionist. But he had that faculty which is potent in business, a terse, powerful, forceful style that drives home a fact.

He told them what was contemplated. He told it cleverly with many opportunities for a hearty laugh. He touched the pathos of former reverses, told why they had been fruitless; then with one powerful swing at the whole crowd, he presented every phase of his pet idea to boost for home, and home alone. There were living examples before their very eyes of rottenness and decay in the heart of their industry. He showed once more the need of sanitation, cleanliness, system, more system, and always system in whatever duty a man performs. He bitterly assailed the spineless creature with no purpose in life, but reached out a kindly helpful hand to the man who was eager to rise.

Sweeping from these facts he showed how one town after another had been stripped of its all by the blind, ignorant, grasping people who dealt with mail-order systems. He showed how unfair are the manufacturers throughout the country who sold to these sharks the very goods which the large concerns could use in strong competitive force against the small dealers in just such towns as Garthage. He read of incidents filled with

countless tragedies. It was not a picture of fancy; but a strong, wonderful thing that was a foe of the deepest evil, and cajoled into their very midst by the mistaken idea that it was a friend. He had not prepared his speech. It came from his heart, and that which comes from the heart and speaks from the lips, goes home to the one it is meant to reach, whether it is a song of love, or a curse of righteous indignation from an abused victim—it rings true.

John Coleen had made his best speech. He knew it when he sat down. He had tasted the first bite of a fruit that had grown from the weakest slip that ever tried to dig its tap roots deep into the cinder earth of Garthage.

Business men listened as never before. Within a maze they saw exactly what the editor meant: that no business is going to prosper which does not unfurl its banner of success each day: "Keep up the whoopla" as Coleen had said, was slangy perhaps; but it suited the occasion. It meant to open doors to the public and invite them in; but it meant more than that; for it was an invitation to see something and not be cheated when you did go in.

Garthage was to grow. It was going to grow fast. There were to be fine buildings, splendid industries, new promises of greater possibilities in the trade activities; but there would be a radical change, and that change had to come with system. That thing which had been the bane of Garthage from its beginning was to be assailed by a systematic onslaught until it was utterly defeated.

"NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE MONEY YOU MAKE HERE, YOU SHOULD SPEND RIGHT HERE AT HOME."

All men applauded this.

"This town offers fine opportunities now for beginners. We don't want grafters to come here hoping to pluck us. We want the very best men the country can offer to come here and be public spirited. Bring your families, live with us, die with us, and if you want to be shipped back to the old farm when you die, we'll attend to that. But you have to go straight; for we want to demonstrate the fact that a town can be run on a basis that hasn't a string to it or a rotten foundation under it. We haven't had a boom. We are not exactly expecting that. We will travel in the sturdy, steady pathway of men who get there after a time. All around us are farms, gardens, forests and streams, which make the scenery a constant delight, and this scenery is but the curtain of our big stage. We will equip and conduct on modern lines, or all get in line and beat it for the Dead Sea."

Coleen turned to hear some remark. "What's that?" he inquired, smiling at the man who had just muttered something.

"I just said, 'Does he think we are a regular old Coxey's army?'"

"You bet your sweet life we are! The private can order the brigadier general shot at daylight if he doesn't suit him as a brigadier general; and the brigadier general can shoot the cook if he doesn't get his potatoes done, or order the whole army out on dress parade at five o'clock in the morning; but it's an army all right and you are one of us." Then with a jolly laugh, he looked his man in the eye and said: "But, Jack, you'll never get shot in the back."

The man's eyes flew wide open as if some person had exploded powder in his face. And Coleen looked at him, through the eyes, down through his very old beer-soaked, reeking, filthy body to the remaining spark

in his heart which God had preserved for possible hope.

Coleen had never been sure of his man. What he had meant as a mere sally, that the man would not run, being too lazy to do so, was one of those strange freaks that bring facts to the surface, like explosions in water bring up dead bodies.

Strangely, however, Coleen did not read the truth; but Jack Olmstead thought he did. That week Olmstead went West. And no one asked why.

CHAPTER XIII

CIVIC PROGRESS AND DEAD SEA FRUIT

NO pioneers of olden times worked with more grit or determination than the promoters of bigger Garthage. As it grew in size and beauty, it gained in the number and strength of its financial institutions. Graceful buildings of cement, wood and brick ornamented the noble town. The trolley development, possibly, brought about the first great aid. It contributed much to the upbuilding of the town in its relationship to the suburbs. The town's growth was due to that ironclad determination to move ahead. The little lamb, weak kneed and wobbly had died. A lion took its place, roaring and snorting, king of trade, master of men's destiny and ruler of progress.

Garthage prospered. Coleen grew rich. He made money and that money made money for him. He had reached the summit of some ambitions. He had patted the big engine on the head to hear it purr, and it did purr for Coleen.

But one day he came face to face with the one woman on earth he wished the most to avoid. It had been possible, for she had been in Europe. Now she was home. She was living within the sunshine warmth of Garthage and he knew she was there, without having seen her. But the day came, not as he had really expected it to come, for he had driven the picture from his mind so many, many times; but each time she came to him where first he had met her, and in the sublime beauty of youth she looked fresh lipped, virginal pure and desirable, and still just beyond his grasp. But they met face to face

on a beaten path, leading from Garthage. She stepped aside and he did too, then as if God, earth, heaven and all things good and true had meant it for them, they touched hands—and knew!

They said nothing but commonplace things; but they knew. He saw the light that comes into the eyes of a woman who tells how beautiful is her love and soul when eyes become the soul's silent interpreters. No word was spoken but each sensed the overmastering tide of love which flowed from heart to heart.

Something hit him or at least it effected him physically like the first effect of a shock. He had felt that queer sensation, not in his heart, but right in his very body, when he heard that his child had died. He had the same feeling when he saw a man killed before his very eyes at the railway crossing. He knew the dull thud when he faced death or danger. And once it had come to him while he was sorting mail. It was so dull, so heavy, so depressing. Every muscle in his body strained against the pain. His veins seemed to seep blood into fresh arteries that never before had known the flow of blood. Animal instinct, call it what you may, only call it something, sensed in the woman, the frail flower of humanity, that mate he desired, the woman he loved, the mother of children he never would know!

And yet they say we have to be in our grave to be counted as dead; but no man's natural death will be half so severe, let it come as it will, as the deathlike hope that makes him despair of owning the woman he wants—for that is man for you.

So they parted as they met and he went home. He could not eat, he did not eat; he could not sleep. He thought and thought and thought. He loved Julia. He loved Natalie. He wanted Natalie. He would not

give Julia up for anything, but that very night he instinctively drew away from his wedded wife. Something, and he thought it was what was fine and good in him, repulsed the sham, while almost suffocating for love in its tormenting reality. He pressed his head down into the soft warmth of his own arm on the pillow. Then he resolved that he would have the woman he wanted, who wanted him in spite of all the powers of darkness.

In the morning he had no compact at all with hell. He kissed his wife, left her in their home, went to his work and thanked God in his soul that work is the one panacea for love that means nothing more in its material form than "a vision of the air, a dream o' summer nights."

But he wanted Natalie, and he wondered why God did not give him the strength not to want her. He now knew the weak link in the chain of his physical makeup, nothing but the slip of a girl, years younger, oh, so much younger, who had sent melody into every fibre of that part of him which belonged to God—his soul.

But a throbbing desire is like a sobbing child. It will sob itself to sleep; but even as it sleeps, it sobs in its slumber; and so great and powerful loves that have sobbed themselves into some form of numbness will unconsciously turn, writhe and moan in tormented sleep.

God is love. God made love. But nothing in heaven is grander than love in its reality; or blacker than hell in its imitation. And so many accept the imitation that it is little wonder they do not fear hell. They almost innocently think the time they have suffered on this earth should be taken off time they must do in that misty, strange, promised beyond, where no person goes to come back with the assurance that earthly

love is a foolish and unwise desire, when heaven is all love.

Coleen tasted the Dead Sea ashes, bitter as gall, and with all the sickening, disgusted, tormenting desire that came and went. Avoiding danger as he would a pitfall, he bent his energies to the one task of making money and so become a money king. But he was poor, horribly, miserably, unutterably poor.

Fortunately there was his work to occupy his mind. It is known that every genius has periods of depression. Just why it is, no person has ever been able to explain. But each man knows the best remedy for it: WORK.

It was singularly strange that a man in middle life should cling so fondly to a mere love affair which the ordinary man dismisses with the coming of the morrow. But there have ever been characters, usually persons of extreme sensibilities, that have every warp of their affection woven into the woof of some beloved affection, the scarlet meshes that cannot be unraveled and, sad to say, do not fade!

That is the only excuse for the tenderness of real love which this man endured for a young woman who, at the most, had merely flitted across his pathway, then far from him. But she came and went in his memory existence and all the goodness in him could not banish her from those secret meetings which no man sees and God alone understands!

During one of these moods he left Garthage on a sojourn throughout Ohio in his new automobile. He was boyishly interested in the machine. Julia went with him. He enjoyed her companionship. He wondered just how he could live without her, and this was but one of the many trips he took which proved helpful to him in a thousand ways and carried a message to

distant ports where the dry rot was causing business decay.

One day his car glided into a picturesque little town on one of the misty blue hills of Ohio. He drove slowly through the town and was able to get a mental survey of the place. The old-fashioned houses huddled back in unkept yards. True, a few modern houses were in fairly good condition, but not actively so. A few children played on the street; immense beds of red and white petunias looked lonesomely from different yards. The shade trees certainly were centuries old. A lazy dog walked across the road, seemingly indifferent to the approach of the car. Several boys were playing a game with jack-knives on an old-fashioned horse-block.

He turned to his wife. "Julia, I wonder if they know Lincoln is dead?"

She gazed at the complete desolation of the town. "I do not know. How pathetic it is. Call it living if you want to; but here is the kind of town that sends its boys into the large cities, those big-hearted boys who can't endure this existence. How lonely girls must be living here, if, indeed, any do live here. I suppose it is like the average small town, a place where everybody is classed by the church he attends and he must ever live according to its strict mandates and precepts."

Coleen drove over to the one Inn. It was a delightful old place, set far back in a large yard. There was some attempt it appeared to keep the place presentable and inviting. There they stopped for their noonday dinner which was excellent.

After dinner, Coleen sat on the wide veranda with the proprietor, talking of the town. The proprietor was satisfied, he secured considerable patronage now from automobile parties. He was glad they were on

the national pike, the best road in Ohio which induced persons to travel to his Inn for chicken and waffle suppers. Then his immense parlors made ideal dancing halls. Yes, he was satisfied in every sense of the word; but he knew that other men in his town could not boast his success: they had no business.

"Has the mail-order business touched you too?" Coleen asked.

"Long ago," replied the old man. "It came like one of the biblical plagues, settled down here and never departed. It has sucked every artery dry. Not a vein of industry has a drop of business blood in it. Dead! Dead! most woefully dead."

"Then why do persons remain here?"

"Well, you see it is this way. We used to have different industries. We had at one time, a great many years ago, a large woolen mill here." The old man then perched his chair at a comfortable angle, for nothing pleases the old patriarch of any town, like the opportunity to talk of the heydays of youth and prosperity. "Yes, we had a woolen mill, a silk factory, two tanneries, several tan yards, seven pork packing houses, two saddleries, a cabinet-making shop, one large grist mill and a cocoon factory. I earned my first dollar carrying mulberry leaves to that factory. They fed the silkworms on mulberry leaves and we boys were glad to earn a 'shinplaster' once in a while. Well, of course, you see how we are situated here, too far from the river, no railroad near us, so the larger towns grew up around us and that naturally took some trade from us. But nearly every family in this town made money, plenty of it. We could have kept the place up, fine and good; but, as I said that mail-order traffic played the deuce here, and our stores could not compete. Understand?"

"Yes," answered Coleen. "I understand."

"Then our young men left. Old cods like myself, with enough to pull through, have remained. You know it is the law of nature for the old to die and that is our fate; but the young, why they leave. We have furnished senators, surgeons, professors and the like to the country; but we have not been able to keep quality or quantity with us."

"Why didn't you fight it?"

"Fight it? I'll tell you why. Just as long as some of us had a dollar, we did not fear any competition. A man feels safe when he knows he has something back there in the old red bank. Then the whole thing fell through like a rotten honeycomb from which every particle of honey had been drawn. We have old men in this town who actually would be in the poorhouse today were it not for the pride of sons and daughters living away from here who support these aged men and women. You see we had nothing to spur us on until too late. We could have held on to a lot of business right here; though I don't believe there is a man in this town, not one, who can say he is making a decent living. I don't do it myself until summer comes, then I have everything coming my way. The town won't rise. It can't. When I was a little lad, we had a magnificent tannery here. It did an enormous business too. The old man, Bradley was his name, owned half the town or had a mortgage on it. Men had one everlasting time to get out of his clutches. He was worse than any nigger slave driver; but not quite so bad as the mail-order octopus. He got what he was after. I can remember when we kids thought it was a treat to step back and see that old money wizard drive by in his fine carriage with his family. Well, a good many changes take place in a man's life. That old man's granddaughter lives here today, poor as a church mouse,

hasn't a cent and the church is keeping her. Things will take a turn, now won't they?"

"Sometimes," answered Coleen.

"We never had a Ways-and-Means committee here. did not even think we needed it. I don't believe we ever did anything with very much vim but try to nominate a Republican president when the time came around, and we all did that, and not a chap ever got anything for it. I've been here almost seventy years now and if you were to ask me what it is for, I couldn't tell you. We live from one mail time until the next and doze."

"Doze is the word," laughed Coleen. "I guess a lot of American people are dozing. I don't think Rip Van Winkle had it on a lot of men, for some never did wake up and what is more, they never will."

"Your town is not a bit different from others," explained Coleen. "I see them everywhere I go. In a large sense you had better protection than towns which grow up over night and die as soon as the sun strikes them. You have made money here and have kept a lot of it, probably enough for all you need; but it does seem a shame that once a town is started and has some promise, that something comes along to disturb it and not enough public spirited citizens will drive it away. I think the meanest, lowest, most unnatural citizenship is the kind we see letting good families move away, without trying to keep them. And you can't keep enterprising families with you if you can't offer them a living."

"That's very true," replied the old man. "Only this week we let a good teacher out here, a man who has a fine family, a worker for the town, interested in everything alive, and he goes, and a young bachelor comes to take his place, a fellow who has no family

and will pocket his cash and go away, as all of them do."

"I understand that too. I have seen it ever since I was a little fellow. It is unnecessary to make any argument for home buying to the persons who regard their best interests as bound up with community prosperity and realize that enlightened reciprocity pays; but too many fail to consider these things and sometimes it is hard to reach them.

"The reason I gather this stuff is because it is my business. I am editor of a paper and you know we voice the public and also talk to it. I—what's that?—yes, it is a thankless job at times; but you feel mighty good when you reach the right parties. I have talked with men, men you really would imagine wanted to get along, but who hadn't the backbone to stick up for their own rights, and it was just that much time wasted. The hardest day's work a real citizen can do is to enlist the hearty support of a lot of citizens to fight for home buying, the most potent factor, too, in the upholding of a community. You give your old man Bradley, or Brady or whatever is his name, a hot shot for unprincipled business trickery; but I'll be switched if I don't admire the spirit in which he went about it. Maybe money was all he got and all he wanted; and, of course, the church knows just where he went; but, just the same, his name is a monument of business integrity. A lot of men get that name more through jealousy than wrong dealing. I know men who have made vast fortunes who could have added fortune upon fortune, and done it merely in secret session with men who only asked that these very men would 'come across' in a big deal, and they would not do it. You don't have to be a highway robber, thief, grafter or professional pickpocket to get money, and I know men

(they are personal friends of mine), rich too in vast fortunes, who do business on a perfectly legitimate basis and won't get in wrong to land something bigger. I know some who have made it mighty easy, just as I would say to you: 'There is a pile of kale, go to it,' and you would go, and go in a hurry.

"Brainy business men who can do the work have that 'kale' pointed out to them. Then when a fellow has his own little pile, he can turn it over and over and it works like a waterwheel, day and night. What gets a man, a right thinking man, and I hope I am one, is to be so little, so narrow, so self-satisfied that he hasn't the gumption to fight and centralize his own interests. I just quit living in a hole like that, the mining town of Garthage—What?—Yes, indeed I am from Booming Garthage. I began in the mining town. I went there several years ago and it was dying too of mail-order scurvy; but it had enough good citizens there to cure it. But here comes a customer for you, and I must be off."

The men shook hands. Coleen had not told of his own big deals, how he, more than any man in Garthage, had been the leader in "I-won't-come-across" in anything like an underhand deal. He didn't do it. He wouldn't. He had one weak spot in his heart, an incurable one; but it hurt no person but himself. He had not revenged himself on old Garthage. He found that unnecessary. He did create competitive trade which made the business houses move, turning their old places of business into gaunt-eyed shacks; but he did it legitimately, while all men looked out. He was justly proud of their civic pride. He had cause to be. But even as conditions were, there was no cause or reason to give up the fight. As weak material as ever lazed in old Garthage came with the first boom and,

like the old hotel keeper, propped back their chairs. They expected some of that type. What they needed most, though, is what they got, men of business integrity to see that progress thrived in spite of every opposition.

And it was no half holiday game to do it!

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE TOWN OF THE FIGHTING CHANCE.

THERE was a coming man in Garthage. It was Francois Zilki who for several months had interpreted many of Coleen's editorials. While it was a new position for him, it was no novelty. He interpreted correctly but slowly, too slowly for the general reporter. Later he went on the editorial staff; but Coleen who readily detected the reportorial quality in any man who makes good at writing, did not wish Zilki to get into the newspaper game. That he would make a remarkable journalist, Coleen knew at the beginning of young Zilki's writing.

There isn't a thing that a young reporter considers impossible. He is adaptable, credulous and imaginative. He even believes in fairy tales. His ambition is never handicapped. But Zilki did not measure up to these qualities. He was deeper. Too painstaking for rapid fire work, he took the time to do his work with that exactness which is not a full requirement in the newspaper office. Facts, not logic, are the essentials. So Coleen weathered him carefully, the foreign sapling, the green timber, ready to branch in almost any direction. Bad handling would ruin this promising youth. A masterful influence, some material help, an insight into what so often is hidden from a foreigner on our shores, were necessary. He was a thinker, always and, naturally, a comer. His mind took long excursion trips. It was a Christopher Columbus trip with a discovery at the end of his journey. Fortunately, too, he could quickly detect the sham and idle subterfuge in almost

everything. It would be a shame to block his endeavors when there were greater possibilities for the man.

It was this candid opinion of Coleen that sent him to Zilki one day in their new office and in his man to man talk he told Zilki just why he wanted to put him in the position of Secretary and General Manager of their Community House.

"With your idea of foreign affairs, as related to every business center; with the command of different languages at your disposal; with your keen insight into what every community needs for its upbuilding, I hope I am not wrong in making the guess that you can fit in this place without a hitch. True, there will be some opposition, I fear; for the office is a good one, the pay exceptional, which makes it desirable for other men to obtain. You just happen to be better prepared, that is all, and if you want the job, why we men will do all in our power to get it for you. It is the chance of your life and I want you to accept it."

"I will," was the simple reply.

Zilki had snatched his brand from the burning. His handsome face lighted with the pleasure that comes with success. It vibrated through his body like a charge of electricity. Awake, up, ready to do, he showed the effect of his first success. The open opportunity before him would offer opposition; but he never stopped when he reached a stone wall. He went right through. Zilki was a business psychologist. He studied the queer twists in the business world as a little chap studies the inside of his mother's best clock, when he gets an opportunity; then puts it together to see that it runs right. It is easy to dissect business interests; but quite the reverse to put it together. It develops so many slips in the cog and it must be adjusted to be of practical use.

"The trouble with a position of that sort," said Zilki, when the idea was fully understood, is just this: "It is largely one of giving advice. Even as a child I would never take advice from any man or woman unless I knew he or she followed it. In business I never took it unless I knew the man who gave it had made a success of it. I have never taken a letter of recommendation from any man, because I am my own recommendation. I have borrowed money, plenty of it. I did not want to starve; but I paid it back. I was no less a man for that than nine-tenths of the financiers of America who borrowed to live; only I wanted bread. I put my heart and soul into my work and that, I think, intensifies a man's interests."

Coleen for a few seconds did not reply. The man was voicing a truth; but his listener was not absorbing it. He was wondering who this young man was. Once Father Jarenski had said to him: "Mr. Coleen, I never look for fine bloom from mullen stock. I never have found instances of brilliant intellect, superior educational attainment or business possibilities when the stock wasn't good. I have found young men in humble families, persons destitute of almost every human need, who have risen to wealth and distinction; but I always found that in the family was that indefinable something that strikes deep in the embryonic state. It has to be. We will pick up our qualifications from the old generations."

Who, then, was Francois Zilki? He lived alone. His companions were few and his only interests were in books, papers and magazines. Being passionately fond of music he went where music could be heard and his chief loafing place, when he did loaf, was with Charlie Holmes. Holmes liked him immensely. He felt that in Zilki were the countless things all men

look for in a man they truly admire, and grieve when they never find them. But Francois Zilki had real ideas and they were not mendicants. Such men who have fresh, wholesome ideas are either queer or exceptional. They find ready market, once they are recognized as idea producers.

Coleen gazed admiringly at his assistant. "Zilki, who are your parents? You are not ordinary. Who are you?"

The large brown eyes, usually made handsomer by the humor in their depths, narrowed. But he trusted Coleen; always had.

"I am a child of love, they tell me, and I know very, very little concerning myself as I was taken from my native home almost at the hour of my birth to hide the shame. My parents, so I have been told, were of different class, mother a beautiful peasant girl, remarkably lovely so they tell me, and my father was of the nobility. They really wanted to marry. They thought no opposition would be made when I was born. But there were troubles. My father left Poland after mother's suicide. He may be dead for all I know. No person ever heard of him from the day he left. I was not a week old when my mother killed herself. I was well cared for by persons who kept me; but my benefactor died, leaving no provision in the will for me, so I was cast out on the world and it was Father Jarenski and his sister who kept me from starving. I have never imposed on those good people, only in my younger years. No person knows what good friends they have been to me. Many times I went to him for help, not knowing what next to do, and he would say: 'Francois, I can help you; but please go see what you can do for yourself. If you can't earn anything today, come back to me tonight.' "

"That's Father Jarenski for you," said Coleen, deeply interested. "Did you go back?"

"Not often; for when I got the idea into my head that he was trying to produce some latent power in me, and was so proud when I overcame any obstacle, I tried the harder to please him. He is a wonderful man."

"Indeed yes," answered Coleen, then quickly turned from the subject. Lying on the desk was a manuscript.

"New?" he asked.

"No. I wrote that last winter. I don't care. Read it if you have the time and patience. It is one of my verdant offerings."

Coleen glanced at the heading, "Commercial Humbugs" and smiled. Then walking over to the east window, he sat down in an easy chair to burrow deep into the sense, nonsense or logic, written by the young man who was to prove a power in the community.

"The only way to kill a snake is to chop off its head. The only way to despatch a humbug is to destroy its industry.

"Christ once attempted to rid the world of humbugs by striking dead the liars, but soon was forced to stop it, as it was discernable that in a short time He would not have people enough left to man an Indian canoe. Many persons have the idea that all wars were largely for the same purpose, though innocent lives helped to pay the penalty.

"There are various kinds and classes of humbugs, but reduced to the last analysis, stripped of the sugar-coating by which they impose on the public, they are one and all simply high grade professors of falsehood. Investigation has disclosed the fact that the majority of our biggest humbugs operate one or another of the

great stock-selling frauds. We see the same evil in every graft from the senate to Wall Street. Having found that American people love to be cheated and buncoed, their field of operation is unlimited.

"I am somewhat inclined to the belief that humbuggery is a disease and that some doctor will yet discover a cure for it—will demonstrate that the habit is due to microbes that get into a man's mind and make trouble trying to turn around; or it may be certain bacilli that bore holes in his moral character to let the man's honesty leak out. The medical fraternity has kindly informed those of us who are kleptomaniacs that we should be medically treated and not sent to prison or the whipping-post, since our malady is serious. This must be a sort of consolation to the reformed who would be cured; but works a hardship on the man who steals a sawmill and wants to go back after the site! To have an analysis prove that a man's mind is out of plumb, that his liver has gone on a jag, that his entire physical and mental being is alive with germs, making a sort of menagerie out of him, certainly puts the ordinary thief in a new orbit. But that is the humbug.

"I submit in all seriousness that we may be physically incapacitated for telling the truth by an insidous attack on the veracity by the dreadful falsehood fungi and that the best way to restore man's moral equilibrium, to remove him from the category of chronic humbugs is to fumigate or shoot him."

Coleen thought of the shot he had received in his own back, and laughed.

"What's wrong?" Zilki inquired.

"I'll fire you if you speak again," laughed the editor. "I'm your definition of a humbug and I guess you know what one is. Don't you think we are all a set of humbugs about something or other?"

"Sure. If it isn't a national humbug it may be a local humbug."

Coleen turned the sheet, and read.

"Science has not yet succeeded in mastering the disease; but give it time to save the world! A medical name will be furnished every human frailty and just to look at a man's tongue or test a drop of his blood, extracted from the back of his ear, as they now get that drop for a small order, they will be able to tell whether the man has office seeker hysteria, mail-order malaria, or just ordinary hay fever. What they will discover will be of great benefit before it is everlastingly too late to cure it.

"Many good 'christian' people have a touch of the complaint. The trail of the serpent is over us all. Even young ladies are colossal humbugs at times. They sell and buy patent complexions by mail; pad out scrawny forms, and many recipients are instantly transformed from erstwhile bean-poles into voluptuous Junos, the better, they think, to bedazzle, ensnare and deceive the willing sons of men.

"In America as abroad, especially in Paris and London, these soft-voiced angels arrange marriage by mail, with the aid of the public press. Many American periodicals assist in this strange business. If the soft voices that woo by mail turn into rasping buzz-saws of discontent after leaving the marriage altar, why two persons are humbugged, that's all. At least we hear it this way which, is proved, may be only the bitter complainings of discontented husbands, tired of the great American humbug, after being soundly beaten at his own game. Marriage is, perhaps, the only game of chance ever invented at which it is possible for both players to lose. Many premeditated misdeeds breed blanks and booby prizes.

"False pride is the father of humbuggery, the parent of hypocrisy. Men are humbugs because they desire that their fellow men think them better, braver, brighter and, perhaps, richer, than they are. They practice humbuggery to attain business standing and social position, having no real prestige for a showing, and nothing they are entitled to by birth or brains to acquire wealth for which they render no equivalent, all to procure power which they cannot wisely employ. History is full of these humbugs. Liberty only too often is clothed in the garments of the humbug and hides as a gilded lie!

"There can be no truth where trickery usurps the throne of honesty. We see it right in Garthage. It is not in one form of business alone, but in almost all. The worst, as I see it, is in mail-order traffic, the first evil that we fought in the genesis of our town. A bigger enemy never came to maim and destroy. How wise men can court it, passeth all understanding.

"When the writer was a boy in Poland we had a circus in our village. A huge reptile, something of the boa constrictor kind, got away. Women were terrorized; men were afraid to pursue it. Even its manager knew how deadly was its sting. Finally they lured it into an immense vat and thus saved its life, not wishing to destroy it. That's the dishonest business reptile in our country. Everyone is unafraid so long as it does not hurt them. Everyone believes it something worth while until they get stung. It is always too late to destroy an evil after it has done its death-dealing work.

"I am not going to say that all catalog trafficking is based on deception, dishonest advertising or fraudulent misrepresentations. But I do know that very little of it is what it is represented to us. Even if it were, of what earthly use is this far-distant trade mart to any com-

munity which would preserve its own industries and live thereby?

"The man who patronizes the mail-order houses is weak. P. T. Barnum sounded a truth when he said 'Americans wanted to be fooled'. The humbug bobs up in every walk of life, in every branch of business, in every profession, in every society, in the church, in fraternal societies and in sports. An effort to furnish an inventory of all the humbugs designed and put into operation in this country would necessitate the publication of a volume as large as the complete works of Dickens; for wherever there is anything genuine, clean, wholesome, *there is to be found a spurious imitation!* Wherever there is a positive, there is a negative. And the reverse of this statement is true. In order that there may be an imitation there must be something of original value to be counterfeited. It is the counterfeit which becomes the marketable commodity to sell at a distance, cash in advance. Money down! These humbugs are enabled to secure the money principally through misrepresentations. Pictures are nothing but lying deceptions when used commercially to sell 'something just as good' under the guise of its being the best.

"The humbug that sold stock by mail in oil wells that never will be drilled, in all sorts of wild cat schemes, prospered and still prospers, despite the fact that, at last, the Government did take a fleeting glance at this wretched humbug and demanded that it sit down and not talk. But its bubbling enthusiasm babbles on just the same, government or no government. And desert land, swamps, the white fire destroyed orange groves, land where the tarantula is lord of all he surveys, goes to the humbug who becomes an advertisement victim.

"Now tell me why they do it? If you fool a man in

his own home, church, town, or right in his business house, he makes a terrible row. Then he makes a deal with persons he does not know, gets gulled, and keeps quiet, not wishing to have it known that he was such a boob.

"They say business men are shrewd. Some of them are more than that. Still we have men in business who got there with money they never earned. They have the simple faith that it works for them without business impetus. Even these men send thousands of dollars to humbugs to invest it for them. And they do. Believe nothing but please believe that. They invest every cent of it—for themselves.

"Instead of investing money at home in some safe and sure investment they often decline with the remark, 'that it does not look just right to them.' I have known men to make vast fortunes from something simple at home which other men never recognized until too late. Its very nearness frightened them. As distant fields look greenest in springtime, so does another man's business promise more profit when we pass his place of business in a thriving city, though it may be rocking back and forth on a mortgage that won't hold it a day longer.

"It is a crime to a nation to sell shoddy goods or adulterated food stuffs, fraudulent specifics for every known disease, legal counsel, medical service, political advice and spiritual consolation. In point of fact every city numbers among its inhabitants a class of citizens who, from choice or necessity, live by their wits. They are local humbugs if they don't happen to be 'southern gentlemen aftah the wah,' playing the races or just ordinary rooster fights in a disorderly quarter of the city. These are the poor but respectable humbugs! There are so many of this kind down south, so we are

told, that we wonder how they find the means of keeping up intimate relationship between the soul and the body. Up north we know: A rich man who has poor relatives to keep, starts a poor farm and puts them all on it. All humbugs have the Get-Rich Quick itch. It attacks them first in the palms of their gloved hands and the bottom of their empty purses. They put on their best and sally forth to meet the believing public.

"With the mail-order men it is done largely by clever advertising. I say clever knowingly. It is exceedingly clever. They prepare the entire plan of operation through the medium of the press and its hypnotic influence. I challenge any man or woman in the world to refute that statement. I can prove it. Every business man knows of companies of this kind that have been promoted and floated where, in the literature prepared for submission to the investigating public, every objection, every question, every criticism, is met in advance, and yet the schemes are frauds from the very inception. The whole thing is just as flimsy as the Christmas stocking purchased for a little child from a mail-order house. It contained everything a child ought not to have. It was a tarletan affair, decorated with red and green yarn tassels and filled with junk which no sane mother would give to a child. It was a complete discord of one cent novelties that exuded suggestions of bacteria from top to toe.

"You are going to find the same red and green yarn in all of these schemes. You can't get a packed stocking of gold nuggets by the mail-order route.

"Mining is a legitimate business as everyone knows. In the gold mining regions of the West and in Alaska and Mexico, in the copper mines of the North and Southwest, in the coal and iron mines, enormous fortunes have been made at times by fortunate men, not, however,

by small investors who live far from the scenes of operation.

"A doctor who accepted a deed to a supposedly worthless tract of land in northern Minnesota in payment of what he considered a worthless account for medical services, collected royalty in iron ore mined on that land which amounted to $80,000 a year for several years. A certain prospector for two years peddled from town to town the minutes of a valuable mineral prospect he had discovered, but he could interest no person with the necessary capital to develop the property. His clothing became torn and threadbare. Often he went to bed tired and discouraged. Finally he met the men he needed and became a millionaire.

"There are many such cases, but for every mine that is opened which pays a dividend or a profit to its owners, there are a hundred fake mines, claims that lie 'next to' a paying mine and are, 'therefore' on the vein; claims where the outcrop 'indicates' unlimited wealth; claims where an 'alleged shaft' has been sunk and but little money is needed to buy the machinery to work the rich rock, etc, etc. The same order of affairs is found in oil booms. Mostly they do even better than mines, for many persons have an idea that oil can be found wherever there is a well drilled to discover it. But oil is found in pockets, and one brother becomes rich on his little barren farm while his brother on an adjoining farm finds no oil and never will.

"All of this is pursued by numberless humbugs. They frequently work by secret methods. They whisper the secret. They come to sell you space in a mausoleum or stock in a mine, oil-well or just ordinary lightning rods. And when they look like easy money, a lot of you cry out as did the Pharisees, 'Lord, I thank thee.' The same old spirit we find in the pretty, pretty mail-order

catalog with its dresses, shoes, boats, hen food and other things, millions of them, that we want even if we do not need them. And that little humbug in his No. 16 brogans trots right along, ready to show you which way to head for financial destruction, and you follow right along.

"Strange that there wasn't something like this: 'Thou shalt not hum with the humbug'.

"The federal government has been forced to intervene for the purpose of protecting the unwary and unwise from the evil machination of this very humbug. Many fraudulent schemes have been rooted out. There are more to come. Said a certain man: 'When some officers go to throw out a lot of rotten mess they go about it like a woman emptying a can of fishing worms.' But the man who said it, failed to say that the men who do what we call the cleaning up business, are looking through those garbage cans and junk piles, hoping to find something valuable for themselves! Maybe just a little humbug to hum to them."

* * * * *

The door opened softly and a little boy, immaculate in his white suit and hat, came into the room. He laughed happily when he saw Coleen and ran up to him.

It was Sonia's little son, Tony, who lived with the Coleens. The little chap filled every corner of the editor's big, hungry heart.

"Well, Tony, what do you want?"

Tony crept between Coleen's knees. His humorous smile revealed the sweetest face imaginable, laughing eyes, a moist pink mouth, not too small, splendid eyes like his mother's, and a chubby, healthy body, properly and neatly clothed.

"I want a penny to get candy."

"A penny to get candy? Oh, pshaw, Tony, you don't think I'd give you a penny to get candy, do you?"

"Of course, you will. No, I did not run off. Mamma called me and so did Mrs. Coleen; but I didn't hear them! Please give me just one cent."

Coleen swung the boy high. "Tony, you shall not suffer for it. Here is a whole great big nickel."

The boy wriggled out of his captor's arms and stood at a distance. "I wanted a nickel, but I said 'penny'." Opening his little hand, he displayed an elephant nick-nack. "I brought this to you."

Coleen took the small cake, looked at it and listened to the patter of boy footsteps reverberating along the hall. Then he walked over to Zilki's desk, laid the manuscript on it and said: "Frank, I'm awfully glad you are going to marry Sonia. I think she is one of the grandest young women I have ever known and she is a splendid-looking woman too. We will miss her. You can have Sonia this winter; but you bet you don't get Tony. Oh, I know Sonia won't give him to me; but she ought to. I'm crazy about that kid. Isn't he a beauty? Julia loves him almost to death. Every morning we hear his little bare feet pattering down the hall over home, then he comes in and gets in bed with me. A man is never a man until he knows just what it is to have a little kid crawl in bed with him to keep him from going to sleep.

"I'm going home to lunch now; but we will run that story of yours in tomorrow's issue. It's the hit dog that howls, and that will hit some of them. Queerest thing on the face of this earth to me, that you can tell the people all of that stuff and some of them will pursue mail-order trade or die in the attempt. After we get you over to the Community House, we will load you up

and if you don't unravel this mystery of the catalog that we have here in Garthage, you'll have to appeal to Father Jarenski for free passage back to Poland. It's up to you, Frank; for you have studied every phase of it. I never suspected that the mail-order traffic would crop out again after our big fight early in the game. It reminds me of the time we tried to beautify Garthage, and also get decent, respectable officers over there. It lasted about as long as a child's birthday party. I used to think you could talk to people like reading them an evening Psalm; but I guess you can't do it. That is my one big reason for admiring Billy Sunday. He tells you the truth, whether he practises it or not. You have to drag in an old freighter at times who has been over the great 'Divide' and has had his profanity developed to a fine art, to talk to some of them. He don't say, 'Come here, little Jacob,' but he grabs up a whip, lets out a lot of profanity that suits the occasion, without looking for the wood-shed. I never could understand why a man takes a kid to the wood-shed to make him gallop around a peach stick. Any place is good enough. Never attempt to move an ox-cart with moral persuasion or Christian Science—or to down the cohorts of humbuggery with sweet words. It won't work. Heavens, but I'm hungry!"

CHAPTER XV

MATRIMONIAL VINES AND AUTUMN LEAVES

IT was not her long, dark hair, which covered her small head, framing a sweet face in its braids, nor her dark, olive complexion, nor her mouth, which was pink like the lining of a sea shell, nor was it her innocence, shown by her girlish movement and looks, which had besieged and conquered the heart of Francois Zilki, commonly called Frank Silky.

At one time Sonia, the widow of Tony and the mother of the beautiful posthumous child, was not Frank Zilki's dream of a wife. He had lived many years in Garthage without so much as knowing or speaking to the young foreign woman. When she went to live with the Coleens. her ready wit, native pride, joy in everything which pleases the delicate sense of a woman, became forceful factors in her character. She grew into the life which she had never known. Being rather quiet and observing, she "caught on" as Americans call it and where Americans generally imitate, it was Sonia's talent to improve everything she learned or adopted. If she saw a dress that she really admired, she made something like it, only prettier; if a hat, apron, merely the arrangement of her hair, it was a compliment to its originator. Good clothes enhanced her foreign beauty. No person would have recognized in the young mother the same half-child who dragged her weary self into one office after another asking for any work that she might support her baby in the best way she could, and often was flaunted in her bravest attempts.

Francois Zilki was a bachelor, a man of peace, one

needing companionship and wanting to be loved. His weariness did not come from the loss of a circle of friends who had married, leaving him like a circus horse, moving along alone, the void in his existence which all bachelors feel when deserted by their men friends who take women into their intimate lives, leaving bachelors alone and, generally, severely alone. No, it was none of this. Zilki had passed Sonia a thousand times without knowing she was in Garthage. So close do we move to those who are capable of making heaven for us, we never recognize their existence until too late. Possibly had it not occurred that Zilki was invited to the Coleens' for Sunday evening dinner, he would ever have been blind to the charms of the radiant Sonia. As a matter of fact, he loved children. It was impossible not to love Sonia's boy. Just to watch the child playing, romping, prattling with John Coleen, developed in most men's hearts something delicate and much to be desired.

Sonia was so happy. She radiated joy wherever she went. As a rule all women are at their very best in their own homes. Coleen's home was so truly her own that never had she felt the oppression which comes to the stranger under a new roof. Julia accepted her as a member of the family. The two women made it a home. Some went so far as to say the reason for this was the love which the Coleens felt for little Tony and not wishing to have him taken from them, they permitted Sonia to live with them, doing just as she pleased. It was unkind to say this; but no person took the trouble to think or look for any real cause or reason that Sonia should be a real member of the editor's family. But she certainly was. Often she arranged the table with the utmost care, artistically placing flowers where they were the prettiest. She instinctively knew, though one

wondered how she knew, just which dress to wear and how to wear it. It cost her nothing to dress little Tony. That was an affair, a luxurious one, of the Coleen family. And in this new life, educated to the American form of living, she met Zilki and sat opposite to him one Sunday night while he dined with them. She enchanted him. He left the house thinking nothing except the admiration he felt for this splendid young woman. After that he met her many times and seemed to live in perpetual adoration. Sonia, long widowed, felt again the glow of love, a love too that would vibrate with a passion which would create many delicious surprises for the young lover. Like most persons in love, each felt there were no other persons who loved just so dearly, the game all lovers play.

Then they were engaged. The matrimonial vine in Garthage was bearing fruit. It often occurs this way and many marriages take place at almost the same season. With the announcement of Sonia's forthcoming nuptial, merely the friendly gossip of people who knew both parties, came another, the formal engraved invitation to the home of the Neugarts!—Natalie's wedding!

Where matrimonial vines grew in wild festoons and formed glorious arbors for trysting lovers and designing cupids, there was a wilderness too in Garthage and autumn leaves fell on the barren earth, snow flakes touched a warm heart, and a man, in love with Love, read his own invitation and felt the whole wide world recede from him.

He was going to lose—everything!

And the man who knew him best, Father Jarenski, who but a few minutes before had read a similiar invitation, walked rather briskly over to Coleen's office. He went into the private office where he found Coleen just

as he expected to find him, sitting thinking with the invitation lying upside down on a pile of papers.

Coleen looked at him, trying to speak. Once he had told Father Jarenski of a love affair, without mentioning a name; and he was thunderstruck when the old man sat down by his side and said: "I just wondered if you would need me, John, at this hour? Forgive me if I intrude. But I love you so dearly, even as I know you love this woman," laying his hand like a benediction on the engraved invitation.

Coleen frowned. For an instant he was angry. Then he knew that no person on earth meant to be kinder.

"How did you know?" he asked. He heard his voice, husky and dry. "How did you know it was Natalie?"

"How did I know? Why, John, you are as innocent as little Tony. I saw you the first time you kissed her and—"

"You—saw—me—kiss—Natalie—Neugart? When?" He measured each word, giving emphasis to each. It was not believable.

"I'll tell you exactly when I saw it. I know it was the first kiss. It was shortly after you made that Fourth of July speech. You were driving home from Brannon and met her on the road. You were alone when I saw you first and I was hastening to the road to ask you for a lift. I had been over to Manuel Marco's, at the death bed of his wife and my horse was injured while there, so I would not drive it home. I walked. I saw you Mr.—John. I saw Natalie walk with you and I just guessed the rest. You can't prevent great waters from reaching and flowing together when they are going in the same direction. I never told you. I simply knew it. I know that you have met her since that time. You saw her not so long ago, I saw you kiss her then. I only

hope no other person saw you. You surely know where I saw you. I was up on Laurel Hill where I often went to watch the birds. I saw you with my field glass. You know just where you left your car. I know it too. John, I was sorry to see this frailty in you, but I'm honest when I say it. Such love must have a touch of realism in it or it would not be. You have acted your lie very, very well; but God knows I pity your wife more than I pity you or Natalie Neugart. But I pity any man who suffers as you surely have suffered. Many men go the limit. I am glad some retaining hand has opposed it in you."

Coleen did not speak. He revolved his chair slightly to turn his face from his friend. When he turned back to look at the old priest, his eyes filled with tears. "I can't help it. I can't help it! I have worked, prayed, prayed and prayed, and this God that you rant about never helped me; never tried to. I don't intend to pray again!"

"That sounds very childish. But I wanted to come, even if I have nothing to offer. I never came to you as a spiritual adviser; and you never sought me as one. But I always came to you as man to man. Forgive me, an old man, if I have erred in this dark hour. Generally a man likes to talk to some person when he is troubled. I knew your trouble best." Coleen got up. "Then come to me the night she is married."

Then Father Jarenski passed through the marble and mahogany hallway. He was a stately, God-fearing figure in that magnificent editorial office. He walked with bowed head, as one departing from the home where Death has been a conqueror. "If it were ordinary love" he thought, "it could be met with ordinary measures.

He loves that woman, as she loves him. Ah, the world is sad for those who love most."

He turned at the corner, following a street lined with fine old trees which once had graced the woods on Coleen's estate. It brought him up to the Steel Mill hospital. A nurse met him near the entrance.

"Oh Father Jarenski," she laughed, "our little patient is most impatient, waiting for you. Yes, Rosie is so much better. I think it wonderful that the Company permitted you to have her sent here."

Father Jarenski followed her down the white and copper hall, into a white-tiled room. A tiny, wasted form, lying on a white cot, smiled at the old man. He made the sign of the cross, laid his fatherly hand on the hot little brow. "Well, Rosie," he laughed happily, "how well you are getting. I knew you could stand that operation. See, I brought you the ring. Oh, I never forget what little girls love, no, never."

He drew from his pocket a small paper box. In its pink cotton depths he disclosed a miniature finger ring, set with three pearls. Never had Rosie owned anything so beautiful. All formal thanks in the world would speak less eloquently than the smile of gratitude from such hungry eyes. Happy? She thought the world was a new found heaven.

And the man who had never known a woman's love or the pleasure of being father to a child, had gone that day to a man who was stricken to his soul, angry with God, defiant of all things honest and true; then to a child whose brutal father had almost killed a little daughter in his drunken frenzy. The priest had waded through the verdant labyrinth of myrtle, roses and lilies, mythical symbols of Love's Court, only to leave for, where dry, rustling autumn leaves crackled beneath his

tread. The smile of Heaven was in the face of the child; the frown of Hades mantled a man's brow.

Oh, World, World, World, ought we to believe in the hopes that crumble like dry sand when life at best is so short, and we need those hopes? Why are so many desirable things withheld? Why is it the young man whose ambitions are ripe, who wants to live and prays to exist, is crushed in the prime of life with some malady, incurable, death-dealing, when some old man, a sufferer of many afflictions, a tedious member of his son's family, or an intruder of his daughter's homestead, prays nightly for peace from strife and living; and lives on? Oh, why is it? Why does Fate take a sweet-faced babe from a mother's breast where she has nourished it from the hour of its birth, leaving her to wail in agony when she thinks of its lonely little grave in some cemetery, so far, far from her arms, when outside she hears the blatant scream of some frenzied mother, calling angrily for her child to come home? Then she hears the blow! Sometimes I think we would fare just as well to snatch what is at hand. We all would do it; but each of us knows that roses stolen today wither with tomorrow's sun, and everything tends toward that hope and moving ahead, forward to the Promise. If it be not fulfilled; what a lot of us will be gloriously fooled!

Coleen tucked the invitation away. He picked up some copy on his desk. He read the first paragraph; reread it, tried it again, without knowing just what he was reading. The door opened softly. Tony stood in the doorway. "Oh, my Daddie, oh, my Daddie, I brought you something. I caught it for—YOU—in the water. I got it all for you." He opened his hand, showing a badly squeezed minnow, the first fish catch that Tony had succeeded in landing. He

had caught it in his hat. The little dead trophy was carried to his best friend, the man he often called Daddie.

The laugh saved Coleen. He looked at the boy, then, at the dirty fish. He took it from the happy boy. "Tony," said he, "you're a regular little dandy. One of these days we'll go fishing in dead earnest, and we'll catch a great big whale." He caught the boy up, kissed him and held him on his lap. There was something eloquently peaceful in the touch of that little body against his own. He knew this child better than he had known his own. Little wonder that the aching void had been filled with love for a dead miner's baby boy.

In the lexicon of youth which fate reserves for a bright manhood, there is no such word as fail—it comes later in life. Coleen closed his arms around the boy, sheltering him from that something which all men find in time. Then he let the little fellow down on the floor.

"Come, Tony," said he. "I'm going to take the fish home and you come too. I think you would look better if you had a clean face and a dry hat. Now won't Sonia rave? No? You just wait and see. You are one magnificent object, I must say."

And the child never knew how his smile helped pull thorns from roses that day. He never was to know. But it did!

After the foregoing article was published, Zilki was not surprised to read a letter, laid on his desk by the managing editor, Alvis Swearengen.

"Chance for you to unravel," said Swearengen.

"If I don't get excited," added Zilki, seeing at a glance what the note contained. He checked himself and brushed back his hair, a movement he often resorted

to when he did not care to talk. He was not exactly tactful at all times, and that was something he desired to be. Most men are supposed to be tactful when, in reality, they are nonplussed. But there was no timidity in the writer's action.

He reread the note several times, then laid it aside for future consideration. Most writers jump into the fray and fight it out. Others meet the man on the back stairs and both go down together, the reporter, as a rule, on top. He sprang to his feet, thrust his chair aside. "I'll answer it tomorrow," he said "I'm deeply interested in something else just now."

He left the office and walked over to the priests home, then down to the church where Theresa, said Francois would find the priest, her brother. He walked silently through the main part of the building, without glancing at the cassocked saints. He glanced at an eastern window, whose picturesque design was a mass of dull colors, playing riot in the evening's afterglow and winged cherubims seemingly traveled toward him with waving palms. Some tarnished relics were lying near the chapel. In an ordinary tumbler was a bunch of fall flowers, carelessly arranged. Francois knew that little Tony had given the flowers to Father Jarenski. He had seen Tony with them. A crucifix was lying in another window. What was wrong? This was not the order of things? And where was Father Jarenski? He saw no person in the vast solitude of the poorly furnished church. He retraced his steps. But Father Jarenski was in the church. He was kneeling in devotion in an empty pew, always empty. Once it had been filled. Who were the people that filled it? God alone knows. Let Him keep the secret, A soul bathed in spiritual waters, rose to its new duty. And the pink, gray, green and blue lights from the old-

fashioned stained window hovered over him as if the evening twilight came to carry the prayer afar.

* * * * *

Francois walked down to his boarding house. He glanced up several times—at the house where Sonia lived. That tempermental young woman, mischievous in her tenderness, dared to hide her sweet self, hoping to make him the more eager to see her that night. But she smiled in hiding. How happy she was!

In his room that night, after leaving her, he turned to his old standby, the typewriter he had used for years, with its broken *k* and its crooked *g* and a ribbon that had gone to glory in many fiery mail-order sermons. His loyalty to the old machine, made him dust it once a year to show he really liked it. He put a sheet of clean paper between the rolls, yawned, thought of Sonia, then began writing. He could not do rapid fire work. He never had done it. It wasn't in him to do it. Quietness brought wholesome thoughts, even as our finest ideas come to us at night-time, wooed perhaps by Morpheus who has the indecency to take them away with him at our waking, if we fail to capture them when it is possible to put those erratic fancies into captivity.

Surprising indeed would it be were we permitted a midnight glimpse in writingland where nightgowned scribes sit up in bed, with nothing better than their knees for an improvised desk. With backs resting uncomfortably on crumpled pillows, minds thrilled with some ponderous ideas, you write, read it the next morning and wonder why you so foolishly lost that much desired sleep the night before. But it is done.

It was necessary to answer the letter sent to the office by Albert Brownlee. Mr. Brownlee was deeply interested in every public affair, paid for by the other man! Once his "deepest sympathy" was placed tenderly on a

subscription list for flood sufferers—and no sufferer needed it!

* * * * *

"Your article in Wednesday's paper deals thoroughly with the Humbug, according to the writer's idea. Merely writing it makes it no convincing truth. Why will newspapers furnish stories of this character to the reading public when they are unprepared to give at least some reasonable cause for it and a way to eliminate it? Personally I believe a man is justified in spending his money where he can obtain the most for it, provided he cannot find the article in his home town. Something practical on the subject is preferred to 'a vision of the air' with no more substance to it than a toy balloon."

Yours truly,
ALBERT BROWNLEE.

* * * * *

Luckily Coleen found Zilki's copy the next day. He carried it into his private office, read it carefully, frowned and sounded the call bell for his office boy. The boy was playing in the building and answered the third ring which irritated Coleen.

"Howard," crossly, "tell Zilki I want him!"

Zilki appeared.

"Sit down," commanded Coleen. "Mr. Zilki," he began, with what the reporter knew was his style of addressing him when discussing important affairs, "I read this," pointing to the copy on his desk. "I'm not going to use it. When did you write it?"

"Last night."

"What time last night?"

"Late."

"After leaving our house?"

"Yes."

"Well, I thought so. Crazy about a woman, half

dead for sleep, turn in home and whip up a thing like this. If you begin by lambasting citizens, telling them what they are right out loud, you will never make a reporter. A good newspaper man is not good because he writes what he knows: It's because he don't write everything he does know. Don't forget that. You want to know everything possible about your man; but you must hold it back. Some fine day it may make good copy. I don't have a morgue for that kind of stuff. I know Brownlee is an old sinner of the deepest black. If our society reporter told the truth she would be publicly whipped at a whipping post. We can't tell the things we know, only when they do the most good. When we get a pot of this dye, why we save it and pour it out red hot on some political campaign, all of it. It makes a nice ripe story. The place for you, Mr. Zilki, is just where I propose putting you. I talked with Holmes, Cansby and others who agree with me that we can get you the place. Don't get serious on this subject. I'll hand the story over to Mr. Swearengen. He isn't doing anything today so he can handle it."

"Is there anything you wish me to do?"

"Of course. Do your usual work."

Outside the private office, Francois stopped, his eyes assuming the injured look of a child who had been wrongfully scolded. Never had he seen Coleen in a bad humor. The turn surprised him. The truth was that Coleen was to go into private conference with some men to pull off a big deal. It had been so arranged that some of his old enemies would get in on the ground floor if the deal came off. It was impossible to keep them out if certain other parties did not uphold the heavy end of the finances. Coleen's money was tied up in too many places to handle or even mortgage it.

Holmes was in pretty much the same predicament and Neugart was sick in a hospital. He had never trusted Cansby who first consulted his wife. He felt there was a nigger in the woodpile someplace and it made him mad.

He was angry all morning. He flung books right and left. He smiled but once and it was when little Tony came in without permission from any high mogul outside, leading a small dog tied to a rope strong enough to hold an elephant.

"Ah, Tony, that dog will get away from you. Why didn't you tie the rope tighter?"

"He's all right, Daddie, and he's just yours as much as he is mine!"

Coleen patted the brown head. To please the boy he patted the dog. "We shall take good care of him, Tony. He is a beauty. Run home with him and tell your mamma to give him something good to eat, that I told her to do it."

From his window he saw Tony leading the dog home. He longed to be a boy again, happy, free, with a mind full of little boy's fancies. Once he had had them; but how long ago it had been! He strongly believed in the doctrine that a man's best help is the help he gives himself; but somehow or other he did not believe it today. He had just torn a leaf from his daily calendar. The morrow week meant Natalie's wedding day!

CHAPTER XVI

BUSINESS ETHICS

SWEARENGEN handed in his article, "Conserve the Home Money."

"It ought not to be necessary to explain to Mr. Albert Brownlee, a public business man, that the statement previously made that certain mail-order lines were humbugs. If our reader has not made a study of it, we have, and it may be for the mutual benefit of others to know why we have faith in what we have discovered to call a humbug. Our term was decidedly mild, one excuse, perhaps, why it is not known as a humbug, generally being termed the octopus.

"Every property value depends on everything adjoining it. Exactly what will happen to a town, village or city which is inhabited by patrons of mail-order houses is what we see in neglect throughout the whole country. It is removing the money from a community, and no town can long survive the acid test of maintaining its own interests without money. Taking the finances from a community, its principle element of strength, its credit, the effect is inevitable, a weakening of the unit of strength.

"Consider all the facts that you can get together and you have absolutely nothing to support your belief that a man's money does him more good if he expends it where there is no possible hope of its return at any time.

"Our local merchants in a former business meeting discussed this very affair, the cause of our sending money to these catalog houses. They know the injury it has done and is doing. They know the remedy, to run their

business on a businesslike basis and give the best to their patrons; however they do not know which way patrons will turn in their ignorance and it is a truth that to deal with our buying public, to teach them this home truth, is the most important affair today in Garthage.

"If only we could make converts of these unthinking men and women, especially the women who, if they make their wants known and see how readily the goods of any grade would be forthcoming, would grasp the idea—maybe.

"Give local merchants a chance to figure!

"It is as impossible to describe in print the conditions of girls employed by the vast city sweat shops, as to etch a discord or paint a stench. Before justice can be done to the subject, a new language must be invented, a language where words are coals of fire. Why repeat the story of the worse than little white slave sisters who toil at pitiful wage to make so many of these unlabeled garments for women who order them by mail. Surely you know the lives they must live when their weekly salary fails to give them necessary food, shelter and protection. It is because you do not see it that you can't believe it. But beautiful womanhood lends its talent and gives its virtue to this Monster. There is no white throne of respectability for the down-trodden woman who accepts the menial work for a starving wage. You don't hear the screams; you don't see the want; but, perhaps, you read of the suicides!

"There are great bargain sales in cities where rich women fight to paw over these articles made by the hands of dying girls. One snatches a waist, fashioned by a consumptive! A little apron, poorly made, was the finished work of a girl who put it aside as her last day's toil. There is no time to compare goods in a so-

called bargain sale any more than is there an opportunity to examine what you purchase from catalog houses.

" 'We can return it,' says one customer.

"Not once in a long time will you receive your money. You get a voucher check for the amount which you must spend with the house, some way; for they have your money.

"But let us get right down to affairs here at home.

"Has any catalog house ever loaned you money to conduct your business? Has one of them trusted your wife, son, or daughter? Where have they helped the church, the schools or supported any charitable institution? Did they ever do anything to help a young man stay in business right in his own home town? What did Garthage have to show a few years ago when this monster was discovered? Why had it not been seen sooner? How were we to kill it if we did not strike right at its head? How many concerns are doing business in Brannon our sister town? What is going on over in that sleeping village? Go to your banks and inquire how much money they believe to be checked out for goods, made and sold away from here. Ask our postmaster today how much has mail-order business dropped off. He will tell you it has dropped off thousands of dollars. We know on which side many of you err. It is on the strength of pictures that you buy. The illustrations in the catalogs of the retail mail-order houses look inviting; the reading matter sounds nice and sometimes the deal turns out all right. But suppose it does! Wherein is the buyer better off than if he bought from a local merchant? You can buy as cheaply at home, examine the goods, return them too if not satisfied.

"Only an advertiser knows just what it costs to advertise. It may surprise you to know that some of the catalog advertising costs from $42.00 to $85.00 an inch

in single column. It is true nevertheless. Where does the profit come out of which these enormous bills are paid? Out of the pockets of the consumers.

"The shoddy imitation of silks, satins, laces and the like, wretchedly made to conform to some leading style pattern, and missing it by a mile (since too many gowns must be fashioned at one time to hope to be really modern when catalogs are issued), make up that riot of stuff which women buy.

"You can detect the dresses as readily as you can pick out a country milk maid in a crowd of college girls. The dresses do not fit the individual for whom they are intended. Examine them and you will see sewing that you would not accept from your own dressmaker. There must be a profit, and the profit is not found in a better line of deceptive goods than just these dresses. Coats—well, look at them. Shoes! Look for the trade mark, many are made in penitentiaries.

"If any citizen wishes to be neighborly and fair, he will take no man's word for the statements herein set forth. We know they are true; but we do not ask you to believe us. But we do urge you to discover for yourself the dead loss this trade-from-home spirit means to any community.

"Fortunately, we are not great sufferers at the present time: Nevertheless, we have offenders. There is always the possibility of a fresh outbreak. We believe, however, that our estimable women now joining ranks to do their duty here in Garthage, will be instrumental in bringing about a complete change. This is why we have pinned our faith to our new Community House when we hope to establish the fundamental rules by which our town will be governed.

"If our reader's interests are at home, there we will see him saving or spending his money.

"Good sound sense and high judgment in what any reasonable man or woman exercise for personal benefit, are the qualities that make dependable citizens. If you can't reason you are to be excused; if you are a blind follower of a foolish leader, you are to be pitied. Whichever way you lean, that is the direction you must follow. If your money goes out of town, some day it may be necessary that you follow it. It has escaped you forever."

* * * * *

An old story which has been printed again and again and copied by newspapers and magazines will bear repeating in this paper also, because it explains only too plainly the facts of catalog buying as they affect the local community. Many of you may have read it and forgotten it.

The cold figures which indicate the price of the goods sold by catalog and mail-order houses, as set forth in their advertisements, are not by any means the true price, as the "Mail-orderist" is careful not to mention the "extra" cost incidental to placing the order and the delivery of the article ordered. The buyer is influenced by the low catalog price, rather than the delivery cost, the latter means of course, being the correct way of determining the cost of the article.

To illustrate the point, we reproduce herewith a conversation which recently took place in a Western town where a farmer entered the local store and inquired the price of an axe. The price of the axe was two dollars, the merchant said.

"Great Scott," declared the farmer, "I can get the same article from a Chicago Catalog House for one dollar and fifty cents."

"I can't buy it for that price," said the merchant, "but I will give it to you on the same terms as the mail-order house, just the same."

"Very well," replied the farmer, "you can wrap it up and charge it to me, and when I settle in the fall, I will pay for it."

"Oh, no, you don't," said the dealer. "We are doing business on the same terms as you do business with the mail-order houses, no credit accounts, hand over the cash please."

The farmer handed over one dollar and a half.

"Now," said the merchant, "five cents for the money order, and two cents for postage."

"What————,"

"Sure you must send a letter and a money order to the catalog house in order to get the axe, you know."

The farmer, although desiring to bolt, kept bravely to his agreement, and paid the seven cents.

"Now the express charges, forty-five cents, if you please."

"Well, by gum," he said, and gamely paid it with the remark; "Now that I have met all your demands, hand me over the axe."

"Hand you the axe? Why man where do you think you are? Just recollect, that you are in Colorado and I am located in Chicago; you will have to wait for about fifteen days for me to make the delivery," and backing up his word with actions, he pocketed the money and put the axe back on the shelf, and smilingly turned to wait on the next customer.

The farmer pondered and after he got through with his deductions he said: "That axe cost me just two dollars and three cents; that is three cents more than I could have bought it for in the first place, and I am deprived of its use for fifteen days besides, no more mail-order houses for me."

This farmer however had one advantage even in this

case; he had seen and handled the axe which he was buying.

The incident related is one which the merchant and the customer both may read with profit, and if more of the merchants adopted the same tactics as did the Colorado merchant they would have fewer mail-order buyers among their customers.

Coleen read Swearengen's copy. He would use it, he believed, yet it seemed remarkably strange to him that neither article contained the solution. Both Zilki and Swearengen could describe the financial disaster produced by the mail-order houses; but neither writer had said one word to those who were losing trade, if not right in Garthage, at least where the news was sent; for the paper no longer was an infant edition that appeared weekly, for it long had been a daily, carrying into its columns that which the editor believed to be of general interest and service to his readers.

He withheld statements which caused controversy unless he knew there was something worthy to bring before the eye of the public. He bitterly disliked old-fashioned editorial squabbles and at no time had ever indulged in them, believing them to be a poverty of expression, meaning nothing, doing nothing, getting no where at any time; though creating strife when editors fought with pens and frequently dined happily together the same day!

Coleen believed in his message.

Men there are who go forth to preach religion. Often they preach only what they have studied, whether they believe the doctrine or not; lawyers follow the mandates and precepts of some civil code. Their treatise is subject to any red tape which these lawyers care to adopt; but surgeons who go into an operating room have made a study of their work if they are successful surgeons.

They know just where to put the knife. They know how to prolong life. And any public benefactor who does the public this service, of cutting out some poisonous growth in the business system must know what he is going to do. He can't study it without being right in the midst of it. It stands no flimsy day dreams. Any man who has made a success of anything has his story to tell. All men have a story in their lives. To get the richest and best results we must go to the fountain-head—Experience.

Coleen had been in the thick of it. It dated back to trouble he had with his father-in-law. That worthy editor followed the dictates of the mighty dollar. Proud, imperious, an aristocrat from birth, he had never known a single hard battle with anything that really meant dollars. With Coleen it had been just the reverse. He had gone through the flint. With his big, tender, generous heart, he felt there ought to be some sort of equality for man. It had to come, too, in their work. Not all men could be diplomats, ministers, presidents; but those who were suppressed by environment, who always would be kept down unless something upheld principles for them, would be losers. And they were for years and years, yes, ages; but they are, indeed, coming into their own. Coleen was despised for his views, abused, and finally so bitterly tormented that the separation was brought about which drove him from his family.

One thing after another came and went in his life. If such a thing could be, he meditated, that the survival of the fittest was possible, then, he believed, the fittest must be up, alert and at work. That was how he had ever figured so successfully when he went about any form of system that proved itself a double power in any business that he attempted to strengthen and make more

lucrative. He made no guess that was not a proven theory. If he did, it was safe to say he saw the finish as he did the beginning.

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away.

Ridicule may be an evidence of wit or bitterness and may gratify a little mind, or an ungenerous temper, but it is no test of reason, or truth, or manhood.

Ridicule, beside being conscious and unconscious, may also be indirect as well as direct, negative as well as positive, paralyzing as well as amusing.

Coleen wondered if the merchants appreciate their advantage. Would a friend of the merchant or dealer have sent his first order to a stranger who showed pictures instead of goods, who talked on paper, instead of face to face, who demanded pay in advance instead of allowing a more unlimited credit; would such an order ever have gone forth in their friend's name had they always improved their advantages?

The answer to that solution was not a half mile from his office. It was the store, but one of the chain of stores, conducted by Mrs. Cansby. Alert, alive, up to the ears in work, restless, nervous, mannish, irritable at times, she demonstrated the fighting chance even a woman has in the competitive world. Everything fine and womanly had gone in the grist. Men secretly admired and despised her. Women regarded Mrs. Cansby as a freak. One instinctively looked from the lead pencil above her ear to her feet, expecting brogans. She was all business, nothing else. She had in her that spirit we don't like in a woman, at least, not the trait for which we love her; for we prefer to work for those we love; but she could shame most men in Garthage, as else where, with her business insight. For a woman to purchase a bit of pastureland, sell it, create a business center on it, establishing even her own bank—well, Coleen

knew she had that fighting something in her that knew there was more than gristle on the bone she fought to get.

There were local men who envied Cansby, the husband, who was getting a long head on himself, after constant grilling from the one who went first. His latent possibilities were, at least, bolstered up with valuable suggestions which he followed. But she never had the time to teach him that you don't eat your dinner with the aid of a knife, so Cansby ate with his knife, and never noticed the difference while dining with men who had been spanked from infancy into the fork habit.

Not seeing!

That was exactly the idea. If a man wanted a plow he sent to a mail-order house for it. Possibly he had a long wait for it; again, maybe, it came in a few days. The hardware merchant had a better plow; but it was not shown in his place of business. His store was unclean, helter-skelter. His windows displayed a thick freckle of last year's fly specks; his electric light bulbs were the same, but he bought no new burners, so the lights were dim. The tinware and granite were dirty. He had no regular business hours. A customer often called him from a poolroom on the left or a tailor's shop on the opposite side of the street. A young man sometimes attended the store. If you wanted a gallon of dark green paint, that boy believed "they did not have it" and did not know "when they would ever get green paint."

The fossil! The mummy! The dead-centuries-ago numb-skull! Mrs. Cansby would have got you or any person that gallon of paint if she had to make it! And that is the catalog house plan; they will get it for you, no matter what you want; but not being there to see what is going to be your goods (for probably, they send

your order a hundred miles from the office where the order is received), you are likely to get anything but what you really want.

It did seem that a man or woman who bought that way was the same as a blind person who would go into a store and ask for a dollar's worth of something, it made no difference what he got, so long as he gave the merchant the dollar! What blind idiocy is that which leads one to buy so carelessly?

While one woman (granted she has money), will spend a half day, whole day or several days in making the purchase of a particular gown, yet there is another type, the ignorant one, who looks at the picture in a catalog and makes her purchase in ten minutes or less. The stupidity of it means one of two things, or both. Either her local dealer had nothing she desired and made no attempt to get it for her, or the woman was lacking in better judgment as regards the expenditure of money, to say nothing of her pitiful ignorance in the selection of suitable wearing apparel.

It isn't wholly a question of dresses. It means everything, not an article, scarcely, that some person in your town does not want at some time. No small merchant can carry the enormous stock sold by the mail-order houses. They don't do it themselves. Being in cooperation with manufacturing concerns, these concerns, accepting their orders, can deceive you, and where have you any possible comeback? With an order written in Ohio, sent to Chicago or New York, the order filled, let us say in Pittsburgh, how is that for created system to help the buyer?

Coleen swung back to his desk. He would tell them. He would tell the truth. It was not necessary to varnish one statement; but before attacking the mail-order concerns, he was ready to teach a different doctrine to those

who, if they heard thunder, would wonder where the cat was that was purring so gently. But, and he drifted into a brown study, would it do them the least particle of good to arouse them to anything like business pride? The big whales could swim and flop and disport themselves as playfully as they pleased in the billowy waves of the financial sea; but the little fish, the small nibblers, why they really, to Coleen's way of thinking, were likely to drown! And why? It was simply because they knew of no public co-operation in a town or village which meant the collaboration of customer and home dealer.

To throw everything into the hands of mail-order concerns has but one solution, their monopoly of a trade which for ages has been conducted by men who have been able to distribute it evenly and generously, giving each man his chance; but monopoly means everlasting destruction, and Coleen was a man who feared destruction more on this side of the Great Divide, than beyond. He had a simple faith that wanted men to live happily with deserved gain, if men wanted it. He had known too many heartaches, too many disappointments, not to have a sort of tender feeling for all mankind. We call that the Christ in most men. That is exactly the definition. But Coleen called it by a different name—"business ethics."

CHAPTER XVII

A DAY IN THE MILLS

EVERY Egyptian was commanded by law annually to declare by what means he maintained himself; and if he omitted to do it, or gave no satisfactory account of his way of living, he was punishable with death. This Law Solon brought from Egypt to Athens, where it was inviolably observed as a most equitable regulation.

The prosperity of a people is proportionate to the number of hands and minds usefully employed. To the community, sedition is a fever, corruption is a gangrene, and idleness is an atrophy. Whatever body or society wastes more than it acquires, must gradually decay, and every being that continues to be fed, and ceases to labor, takes away something from the public stock.

Man must work. That is certain as the sun. But he may work grudgingly or he may work gratefully; he may work as a man, or he may work as a machine. There is no work so rude that he may not exalt it; no work so impassive that he may not breathe a soul into it; no work so dull that he may not enliven it. The force, the mass of character, mind, heart or soul that a man can put into any work, is the most important factor in that work.

The highest excellence is seldom attained in more than one vocation. The roads leading to distinction in separate pursuits diverge, and the nearer we approach the one, the farther we recede from the other. Thus it is with the men of today, and thus it was with the men of Garthage, each was a specialist, each an expert in his line.

No grander or more inspiring sight could be witnessed

than a morning in Garthage, with its thousands and thousands of happy, satisfied workmen wending their way silently towards the vast and impressive mills and factories.

* * * * *

I viewed the spectacle of morning from the hill-top with an emotion that an angel might share. The long, slender bars of cloud float, like fishes, in the sea of crimson light. The first streak of light, the earliest purpling of the east, which the lark springs up to greet, and the deeper and deeper coloring into orange and red, till at length the "glorious sun is seen, regent of the day"—this, city people and idlers never enjoy, for they never see it.

I never thought that Adam had much the advantage of us from having seen the world while it was new. The manifestations of the power of God, like his mercies, are "new every morning" and fresh every moment. I know and love the morning. I love it fresh and sweet as it is—a daily new creation, breaking forth and calling all that have life and breath and being to a new adoration, new pleasures, and new gratitude.

Coleen left the hill where he had viewed the awakening town below him. His mental revery had traveled quickly to the immense works in the valley below, industries of a large and sturdy growth, increasing daily and officially reported as being a success.

Yet there had been one flaw, a big one. It was like the miniature leak in the great dyke. It would lead to destruction if not given prompt attention.

So he went down into Garthage, ready to stop one bad proceeding, if possible. He went direct to one of the mills, the first built in Garthage, which had given work to hundreds of miners who filed silently out of the mines to find easier work, better pay, and a winning

chance to earn their own homes. His workmen were all right. How glad they were of the opportunity to get work without moving. Their appreciation was not dormant. Zilki had done his part nobly and well in his forceful talks with the men, instilling into their minds the power that was exerted in their behalf. It was indeed something to have a man come into their midst to take care of the minor as well as the big ventures.

Coleen met the very men he wanted to see. He did not invite them to the Community House nor did he call for any special session. He met some of the men at the mill, telephoned for others and sent his own car for a stockholder who lived out of Garthage. In less than an hour the men were at the mill office.

"I'll come right to the point," he explained. "We are all in on the deal. Without a word, as to my own policy or principle, I have just this to say: We are preparing for a deal here. The orders are in; we have the men to fill them. We need supplies and they are to be ordered. Now, what I want is this: That every order shall be filled right here in Garthage! We have something like $85,000 to use on a beginning and we need not send fifteen cents out of here, if we don't want to, and you all know it."

"What is the idea? To depend wholly on what we may be able to purchase here would delay—"

"Delay nothing!" roared Coleen. "That's the spirit in too many towns that have an idea that anything bought at home is likely to cause delay. I say, if there is any likelihood of delay (but there is none), then get busy and leave that money here. We have the men, the ambition, the work and it is up to us, just this bunch here in this office to play this deal right at home. It means future orders from every concern at home. The largest stockholders of any concern that ever hope to

see any growth in dividends can't get it any other way than the one I plan."

"Oh, I thought you were a reformer." The man laughed. "So, at bottom, is the fact that you are thinking too of a dividend?"

"I might just as well think of the dividend as you to think of a rakeoff, if you get this through with Pittsburgh or some other concern. Certainly I expect my share of a dividend. I'm working for that, just the same as you, or you, or you. I am not in this business for my health; but every last one of you know I'm working for all Garthage. I have men working in these mills that I encouraged to come here. They see the way to better achievement. They want homes. When they get homes, they will be alive to every industry the town affords. Think what it will mean just to put this much back into our own coffers, for it is an example that will be followed. I'm very much in favor of taking care of little borrowers as well as big ones.

"Most of these men are like wanderers. How benevolent we are to them in our intentions, as benevolence is often bestowed, when we appear to them as helpers. It will mean a whole lot to us to begin this policy. I want it. I've worked for it from the time I came here. You know, every man of you, how I have saved the town from mail-order traffickers. And you know it has been the merchant's salvation. I take no credit for merely agitating it; but I am pleased that these men throughout Garthage and, in fact, over the entire East, are awake to what was threatening us and are fighting the foe. This is just an example of our own. Shall we or shall we not be consistent when it comes right home to us?"

"You are right," came a chorus of voices.

"I think so, too," replied Coleen. "Look the job right

in the eye. Now is the time to get out your orders and if we can't get everyone filled here in town, we will send for extra men, that's all. We are not going to throw anything away. That is all I have to say right now. I don't give the orders; but some of you men do. There isn't to be any rakeoff in this business, nothing at all as a catch. We have the money to pay for good goods and that is what we must insist on having."

He picked up his hat and left the office.

"What do you think of him?" laughed Parkinson.

"I think he would make a first rate Frick or Carnegie if he didn't have to butt up against a lot of dead timber," said Holmes in his quiet, easy going way. "That man's as clean as fresh steel. I have tried him, tested him out, done a hundred things, merely to test him, and you can believe it or not, he is right there with the decency and the honesty to stand by his convictions. He's right about this. We ought to keep it at home. He doesn't believe in being weak on cash dividends any more than being weak or wobbly with rattle-brained Hunkies. If he had accepted all the offers made to him to buy stock in promising ventures he might have doubled his fortune; but he prefers to work along his ideas of business and I'm right with him on most of them."

"Don't you think some of his remarks in the paper are unmerited abuse of the American privilege?" asked Parkinson. "I agree with him too on some of his pet theories; but I want to know just what he has done. I know what he says and what he prints. But, Mr. Holmes, I don't know of anything, really, that Mr. Coleen has done for Garthage."

Holmes' chair creaked under the sudden turn of the occupant who wheeled suddenly around to see the speaker.

A flash of anger darkened his face, then he gave himself up to the satisfaction of a grunt.

"Well, Mr. Parkinson, pardon me. I know you have not been here very long. I'll tell you exactly what he has done. In the first place he came here and he went to live over in Garthage. He was nothing but a poor editor with an idea. He believed the mail-order traffic was destroying this section of the country. He fought it. He fought it in the paper, in the council, on the platform, everywhere that the opportunity presented itself. And, strange as it may seem, when he was doing a deed of kindness getting nothing for it, then, he met with opposition from the very start. He made many enemies and kept none. When men recognized his aspiring genius, they came to him and helped him out to the man. I don't think we have any men here who are against him."

Holmes took a sharp look at Cansby who was making crosses and dots on a gray blotter lying on the table by his side.

"Then," continued Holmes, "he fought everything in this town to awaken civic pride. He shouldered both burdens. He came at an opportune time for old Garthage was a dirty place and there was much sickness and death over there. There was a lull, then he interested men in bringing the mills to this end of Garthage. It was simply because this is where he had land and realizing that Garthage was a growing place and would eventually take it in anyhow, he worked from the middle outwards, which any of us would do if we had the opportunity."

Several heads nodded.

"He knew that practically all of Garthage over on the east side belongs to the mine owners. They have bought, leased and optioned a big territory over there;

for there are rich holdings in that territory, as you know. We had to get out of the mining district if we wanted something besides mines. And it was all right to string it out as we have done. You see the result and it is perfectly systematic.

"Aside from this, he used his influence to get that section of the railroad moved northward for the accommodation of the people and he practically gave the station site to the company. He never stopped day or night until we got the trolley service and he got us our Community House. I don't know what it is that he hasn't done. And you can't, to save your life, find a flaw with it. He works right in the daylight, that every man can see. There were men in this town who actually let taxation wrap them up like mummies until he got here." Hostilities ceased when he fought that openly. We have had a fairly square deal ever since. Now he has a man, Zilki (you know him, I guess), who is following in his tracks. He is doing with the foreigners just what Coleen is doing with the Americans. And he is some comer, believe me."

"And you mustn't forget to mention," said Cansby, "his fondness for Father Jarenski."

The men looked up quickly. They detected sarcasm in his voice.

"Yes, and his love for Father Jarenski, the Polish priest, the old man who housed him, fed him and saved his life when some persons would have killed him and even tried it. But let me say right here," and his voice lowered more than before, "he isn't after anything. I know and I know it for a certainty, that when that old priest went among his men, trying to help them financially through a bad strike here that he could only do so much. Who helped him? It was Coleen. He isn't a Catholic; but he is the brother of man. No person

knows it. Maybe I do wrong to tell it; but I know why he never forgets a kindness nor an injury either, for that matter. The place for a man of Coleen's calibre is not in a city like this. His place is with the national affairs; and I would not be surprised to see him go that way. His work is receiving recognition throughout the whole of the United States. His editorials are quoted and many elaborations of his mail-order ideas are voiced through the American press."

"Thank you," replied Parkinson. "I really did not know the man. I shall take greater interest in him in the future. I want to meet that kind of men and know them more intimately. I never meet a man of that type that I am not reminded of a fine old greyhound walking sedately among a pack of dirty curs, barking hounds and little pups, all biting, snarling and fighting to get a chance to thrash him, and he walks on actually unconscious of them. He doesn't know they are near him."

Holmes laughed. Several men echoed the merry laughter. "That's your man," he answered. "As you have been here only a few months with the mill, I did not think you knew him when you asked me what Coleen has done. That isn't all; but I'll leave something for you to find out for yourself. He is a safe-deposit box of honest securities. Believe that!"

While the men were talking, Coleen had gone into one of the newer mills. There was a man in there he wanted to see. The day was still early and many workmen were just arriving while others were busy.

He glanced around him. Everything was in order. If a painstaking woman with her overworked broom had made the rounds of this huge place, following it up with soap, suds and woolen mop it could not be much cleaner.

"Space," he breathed. "Lots of space. Sunshine, air, light, cleanliness." The vision of the eye leaped

ahead to other immense departments. There was the clean rail of the inside railroad track, free from any junk, boxes or unnecessary material along the siding. No well kept grocery had its supplies in better order.

The brisk October air swept through the open windows, and no man felt that he really was indoors on this ideal autumnal day. True, the great, flaming furnaces belched forth their fiery tongues of scorching heat. There were ways to avoid much of the discomfort caused by the same devices which are short of Dante's descriptive Inferno in some cities. This, then, was system. How he loved the word. It meant the foundation of everything in business, just system.

He looked at the giants of invention with the pride and curiosity of a boy. How many, oh, how many wizard minds had concentrated their tense ideas in bringing about just the simple plan of this big mill which was not simple at all in its immensity; yet seemingly so because of its order and system. He heard no loud-mouthed brawler cursing the men. He saw no iron muscled Hercules of strength striding among them, ready to kill the working spirit of a man with his roughness or meanness, his only idea of showing them he was their superior. Whose work? And he knew whose it was. None other than that of Mr. Parkinson who had collaborated with Father Jarenski and Francois Zilki, in bringing into this mill hundreds, yes thousands of men who, at times, had trudged under scorching sun or freezing wind to the mines, there to be buried from God's sunlight day in and day out, some of them virtually living their lives underground; then to—this cleanliness, order, a convenient hospital if an accident should occur. Everything was of greater importance, and everything showed that new trend of business ideas—no not ideas, ideals, to put the working man in a place of better, more cheer-

ful and healthful environment. Thank God it is finding its sway even in the great prisons. Someday the close, foul-smelling, miserable places where men, women and little children live and die to earn the mere pittance, will appear to the world, America at least, like the clean, open, October aired mill of Garthage. And yet there were men in that town who wanted to send their orders to other factories!! This, too, when the mill was but one of the many that was coming to the front in the big industrial world.

Coleen had not done this bit of work. Yet he was a cog in the wheel. The concentration of his high-power thinking had inspired others. His new methods were not original, they only came under the mighty influence of adoption.

Many men have big ideas, thundering down the space halls of Time. But they are ideas which must be capitalized and, being of so much importance, a single man cannot put them before the public without the necessary support to do so. If Coleen had not been editor of his paper, he, too, at the start, would have failed dismally. His paper was his advertising sheet of this big idea. He never said a thing that he did not believe or could not prove. He let no vigorous idea die. He trained every hope.

Time and time again some person came to him with what he thought was an argument to sweep him off his feet just as did the farmer who asked "why he could not buy just where he pleased, this being an independent country?"

Coleen listened to him. He came with a snarl, did the farmer. Sometimes it is difficult to straighten out snarls.

"What you farmers want, what you fight for, what you send men to the legislature to obtain for you is a freedom

that you don't recognize when you get it. There isn't one of you that doesn't talk unity, centralization, and all of that; but when you actually get a central trading point near you and find yourself within hailing distance of it, what do you do but spoil every chance you have by dealing right over their heads. I know you do it. You do it right along. You toss a whole year's harvest over their heads into the maw of some big Trust that don't care a rap for you. You don't do a thing to increase the wealth of the central point that you want to build; but you do scatter your forces and wonder why that section of your country is not a Klondyke in cornfields, meadows and the like. Just as soon as men find a Klondyke, they go there. There never was an Eldorado on God's green earth that did not have men rushing to it to get rich. But the trouble with a lot of you is the fact that you are not willing to make your Eldorado or your own Klondyke; you want somebody to find it for you; then go out and lead you to it. You all think you need a Napoleon to teach you how to get your dollars; but a lot of you don't realize that under your well worn jackets is Napoleonic strength and power that is afraid to act. Afraid is the very word. You are cowards, hangersback, leaners. If any of you see a man lifting you don't wonder at his strength; you wonder if he is crazy. You all have ideas which you don't utilize or materialize; but you send your stuff away and look at what you get in return.

"I haven't visited these farmers in the East just to talk with them. Some of them are too busy to talk. But I see where a lot of them are looking forward to going to the West, when they can afford it, to a land that never has a real green lawn unless it is under eternal irrigation. Because California offers you another sort of real estate goodie; you have the eyes of a child that

always sees distant fields are the greenest. I've known men to get out there on land that they dickered to get, that was so far from a railroad that it will be ages before a steel rail is laid within hundreds of miles of the farms that some poor fellows own. Your Eldorado may be your own little Ohio, Pennsylvania or West Virginia farm. If there isn't good picking here, no need to go West. You are not commanded to go West. You get increasing results—not by moving away, but by moving a little livelier just where you are! A lot of you can adopt that with very little change."

Later he returned to the mill where again he met the men he had talked with. They had sent for him. The men, at least some, were hold-backs, kickers, blockaders, what every business man is going to meet at some time or other, and call the disturber a business nuisance. That nuisance too is the ostrich that buries his head in the sand to hide the calamity when it approaches. He doesn't want to see. His theory is that money will make money, almost regardless of the investment. This is his shallow idea of what the law will do to support what is his ignorance.

Thinking cannot be clear till it has had expression. We must write, or speak, or act our thoughts, or they will remain in a half torpid form. Our feelings must have expression, or they will be as clouds, which, till they descend in rain, will never bring up fruit or produce a flower. So it is with all inward feelings; expression gives them development. Thought is the blossom; language the opening bud; action the fruit behind it.

Coleen had been thinking for some time on the subject of establishing in the Garthage works a minimum wage scale. But thinking brought no results. So he called together the board of directors and placed his

proposition squarely before them after returning to the mill office.

He argued that the history of old Garthage was one of strife and bloodshed, the result of strikes. And strikes were the result of poverty. "Strikes," he said, "were the most reckless and prodigal waster of property, life, of the happiness of families, and the prosperity of a community that the world has ever known. They are the destroyer of commerce, the hot-bed of vice, the nursery of intemperance, the school of profaneness, the promoter of cruelty, the panderers of lust, the ruin of morality, the despiser of the decalogue, the grief of angels, the joy of devils! They have done more to make the world one vast Golgotha, than any other form of sin under which the earth has ever groaned and suffered, and over which angels ever weep."

As he warmed to the subject so near his heart he said, "Give me the money that has been spent in strike wars and I will purchase every foot of land in this vast State. I will clothe every man, woman, and child in an attire of which kings and queens would be proud. I will build a school-house on every hillside and in every valley; I will build an academy in every town, and endow them and fill them with able professors; I will crown every hill with a place of worship, consecrated to the promulgation of the Gospel of peaceful arbitration. I will support in every pulpit an able teacher of righteousness, so that on every Sabbath the chime on one hill should answer to the chime on another round the earth's wide circumference; and the voice of prayer, and the song of praise, should ascend like a universal anthem to heaven."

"If you divorce capital from labor, capital is hoarded, and labor starves. Whatever there is of greatness in the United States, or indeed in any other country, is due to labor. The laborer is the author of all greatness

and wealth. Without labor there would be no government, and no leading class, and nothing to preserve. Labor is one of the great elements of society—the great substantial interest on which we all stand. Not feudal service, or predial toil, or the irksome drudgery by one race of mankind subjected, on account of their faith or color, to another; but labor, intelligent, manly, independent, thinking and acting for itself, earning its own wages, accumulating those wages into capital, educating childhood, maintaining worship, claiming the right of elective franchise, and helping to uphold the great fabric of State.

"That is American labor, and all my sympathies are with it, and my voice and effort till I am dumb, will be for it. For from labor, health, and from health, contentment springs."

Coleen had warmed to his subject. "Take away the local center, the small town with the schools, the amusements, the churches, the stores and the railroad station, and what have we left? When we bring them together, we build up a stronger and better country. I can't liken it to anything better than to say that every town must be a perfect part of the big business plan; that no weakening should occur in any section any more than to admit of weak structural parts in a powerful engine which depends upon the small parts.

"Right here is where we need a radical change to benefit and encourage the growth of the town. It is in reality a city. But we want to keep our men and the only way to do it is to furnish work and give the employes a part of the annual profit. I know it is generally the office force that gets that; but I'm speaking for every man."

"Just one minute, Mr. Coleen." The speaker was Cansby.

"You speak of the profit-sharing plan. That amounts to a raise of salary per capita, and you know, if you stop to think for one serious moment, that every time you raise a man's salary, it necessarily raises the price of every purchasable commodity on earth. You know that! It isn't how much a man earns; but what he gets for his dollar that counts. If I can earn a dollar and get five times as much for it as I now pay five dollars for, how much better off am I?"

"I like your argument, Mr. Cansby. It has been voiced all over the country and I don't have to think about it at all. It is quite an old saw. Do you know the destruction it means to the nine hundred and ninety-nine little places on this earth that must pay the prices put up by the Big Trusts? They must have a wage to meet the prices which, you know, if you stop to consider it, the man of small salary must pay, just the same as the rich potentate. A miner can't get a cheaper dinner of the same material than you put on your table. Not a mill worker in this town can save from his wages one-half the price of a home if he must live up to the times. If we can't control the big industries, I don't see why we can't do the right thing by giving men a minimum wage. The real object of this mill is to sell steel at a profit. You know we do it. If, by giving a reasonable wage to our employers, we enlist the interest, skill, care and earnestness which each and every employe can give, won't it win and hold the confidence of the men? Where it has been given a trial, they claim an increase of efficiency, punctuality, carefulness, regulations, loyalty, willingness, obedience to all rules and a co-operation that proves harmonious. When we furnish capital, equipment and management, the employes furnish intelligence, labor and skill. We are partners and we share alike."

CHAPTER XVIII

THEN COMES A DAY

OCTOBER dusk followed the scarlet and orange afterglow of a perfect day, and after a while there appeared as if by magic the countless sparks of light which always remind the dreamer of some infringement on the perfect harmony of the lighted stars. In the distance several mills sent up a flashing glare of light; sometimes a trailing car of burning slag crept down the invisible track, depositing the burning ash over a deep embankment, where much of it fell into the water, sending up a hissing sound and beautiful clouds of vapor that rose ghostlike and disappeared into ethereal nothingness along the horizon.

While viewing the scene, a train pulled out from the station. Coleen watched it as it sped down the track and into the yawning mouth of the great stone tunnel, as black as one's mental idea of the opening cavern of Future Despair. He watched the train with a feeling which no man can analyze. We leave him with his mental thoughts; for who of us can fathom them? Who can read the mind and heart of man and give its fullest delineations, emotions or fine sentiment? Too many of us take great and wrongful liberties when speaking of a man's love affairs. Too often we say what he would not say and do what he would not do and make him act contrary to the best or the worst in him.

On that train was Natalie Neugart, the bride of Philip Mendenhall, a corporation lawyer of New York City. Coleen stood for several seconds gazing into space. Then he turned to his desk and called in Zilki.

"Frank, what have you done over in Garthage?" he asked. "I've lost out lately on some of the things I told you to do. I knew you were in the office, so I thought I'd have a talk with you. I'm anxious now to see something result from what has been undertaken."

Zilki sat down, thrust the fingers of his right hand through his brown curls that tantalizingly twisted back just where they were.

"I'll declare if I know what I have done. Now, candidly, Mr. Coleen, I have done wonders with some classes of people, generally the better class of foreigners and those who have ambition to go into business. I have some people whom (he threw up both hands and brought them down with a smacking emphasis on his knees), you can't teach a bit better than I could teach a goose. I guess some of them are goose nationality. Now, for one thing, they are illiterate. I can't do a thing with them. I want to; but I guess it is a truth, you have to get a Guinea in the embryonic state if you want anything from him. I tried a little stunt over there by putting some families in houses that are more modern. You know the five Pasco houses? Well there is a bathtub in every house; and I went right with the families to each house; told them how they could earn the houses; what we wanted; how we wanted it, and last week—no, it was week before last—I went over and I found Alcheski had two bushels of potatoes in his bathtub; and over at Zorki's I found coal in the bathtub, it was so easy his wife told me to scoop the coal out of one end with the round shovel! But Ranchi put a new one over. He had his bath full of water and filled with beer bottles to keep the beer cold! Beat that, if you can."

Coleen roared. "Why, Zilki, you old scout, you are getting along all right. At least they have discovered a use for the bathtubs; and you can get them to use them

for their rightful purpose in time. This is what Mrs. Coleen and Sonia call home missionary work."

"Then they ought to do it! Sonia just laughs when I tell her. She shakes her head and says: 'Francois, my dear, teach them to learn their a, b, c's, honor the flag and kiss the cross and you have done the work of fifty missionaries who go abroad to teach women in foreign countries it is wrong to wear beefbone trinkets, grass dresses and worship heathen idols." The other day I went down in Carey Patch—my heavens, Mr. Coleen, that place needs to be double-policed. The miners live like cave dwellers. I saw little Johnnie Brugosh playing around in the yard with nothing on and it was cold as blixy. I told his mother she ought to be arrested and I made her promise to haul Johnnie in and clean him up. What did she do? She walked right out in the yard, caught the kid by the arm, stuck him in a barrel of rain-water and while he howled, kicked and swore in English and Polish at the same time, she wiped him off with her apron and put him down again!"

"Nothing new to me, Frank. I've seen it all. It's awful. It is simply terrible. Yes," solemnly "it will take a great amount of labor over in that district to accomplish anything worth while. Did you do anything with Letroski? I mean about the store?"

"I certainly did. I told him he could get the store for a mere song. He bought it and, honestly, it is a fine place for that part of town. It's clean, the cleanest place over in Old Garthage, and he promised faithfully to keep up the standard. You know it's pretty disheartening to keep a first class store for that class of people who come in all muddy and unkempt. But he is managing it somehow. I talked with him about our modern ways, how very necessary it was to keep in touch with his customers, not to let anything get away, especially to

mail-order houses and he knows more about that than I'll ever know. His only handicap is in not getting all the miners; for some of them must buy from the company stores or lose out."

"Did you explain if they do lose out that we can use them over here?" Coleen asked.

"Yes, I explained everything; but you know some men know nothing else and want nothing else. All I can do is to get the children into school. That must be rigidly enforced and we can do nothing better than see that every child in this whole town goes to school. We must get them there, then make them realize just why we want them taught. It won't do to let one leave school under sixteen years of age. If we can hold them until that age—why they'll be Americans; if not, they will be less than nothing. They persistently refuse to send their children to school if they can put them out to labor. It has doubtless been the lot of the parents and the grandparents; but these children must go to school. Some are as bright as new coin from the mint; others will learn slowly. But while we are generating business and patriotic enthusiasm, we must look to the children and not the bathtubs. Letroski is a broad-minded man anxious to succeed. He isn't like a lot of foreigners going into business over here with an over-developed imagination that is merely an idea of getting rich by luck."

"By the way, before you leave, I want to ask you a question. Is Neugart a foreigner?"

"No. I once asked that question myself. He is an American. He got the foreign idea of farming while living in California. Maybe Mr. Coleen, we can tell men and women how to run mills and make use of bathtubs; but when it comes right down to scientific farming, we are ignorant of the first requirement. You can give a foreigner a rock on a steep hillside, a handful of

clay and he can make a cabbage patch that will take the prize at the county fair. They can grow things from the stone pike to the window blinds in the house and always get a crop. I honestly do not know why, more of them do not strive to get little farms. There's money in it for every crop. Even if not for commercial purposes, at least there is a good living on the farm, especially an Ohio farm. In that, even the illiterate foreigner, shows a spark of scientific management which I suppose the good Lord implanted in him to keep him from starving."

The door opened and Father Jarenski came in. He carried a bouquet of late fall flowers, asters, sweet-scented fern, chrysanthemums and colored leaves. Only a ruse —nothing but a ruse. He, too, had watched the train leave the station, knowing at least, one passenger. As Zilki left the office, Father Jarenski took the vacated chair. He placed the flowers on the desk.

"This is about the last one this year that Theresa can send you. Frost comes and steals my little children from me." As he spoke his hand caressed the velvet petal of a dark red zinnia. "I talk with them, you know. I might live in this world for time and eternity, and never know there was a God, a Ruler, a Power, if it were not for the flowers. We can imitate them; but we can't give them life. You might take the type downstairs, jumble it together for ten billion years; yet you couldn't make a newspaper of them. It takes Something to systematize."

"Yes, Father Jarenski, it does. It is a world that is all system in its formation and creation. The trouble lies in the poor management of everything so grand, powerful and scientific. You talk of God and I talk of God and I listen to every theological sermon the subject contains; but I see the godly man live in want, praying,

hoping and dying in despair; while some of the vultures succeed, have not a reverent thought and die as successful business men. But I've quit trying to analyze that. You may find God in your Bible and with the flowers; but the happiest day of my life is trying to imitate Christ's example in the town of Garthage.

"I used to think Christ was a young laboring man, physically weak, visionary and calm. I did not admire Him from the teaching I got. It confused my mind. I have learned who He was. I can think of Him as a Hercules among men, yet gentle as a mother. He tried to win the hearts of men for the true cause and without thought of personal gain. I have an idea He was as firm as He was gentle. Christ is an example for man. God made the flowers, true enough. I love that Power which is indefinite because of its greatness; but I'm an admirer of Christ for what he is to this little old world of men. If I am a man, let me be a man unto man, though I lose every cause! I am not original, so let me be an imitator of one who made a success of being loyal to the brotherhood of all mankind!"

Father Jarenski listened quietly. At times he nodded his head and looked Coleen squarely in the eye.

"I'm glad you told me this, John. I'm very glad. I know you are going home with a triumphant heart this night. If I could talk to such men as you, I'd do my part. But—well, why should I ask that my vineyard be easy to till? My labor is almost done, almost; and, John, I want to go home. I want to go back to Poland. I'm an old man now, too old for my Master's work. I must lay it down. I'm like a little child again, looking for my cradle, only it will be my tomb. I want to go back to Poland! Why don't I go? Dear boy, I haven't the money. I can't take from my beloved flock to satisfy this earthly craving. I'm selfish after all these years.

But it is mostly for Theresa. She wants to go while there is light. She wants to see—I know exactly what it is. I want to see it too. But she is going blind! I can see the old home, the green grass, the flowers. I often hear the curfew. I know she hears it too. I see it when she sits and dreams by the window."

"Well, if that is all that keeps you here, you'll go back to the green grass, gay flowers and curfew bells; for I'll see that you do!"

Coleen turned his back. He saw tears in the eyes of the old priest. He busied himself with the flowers, placing them in a crystal bowl of water. When he turned to face the priest, his caller was silently leaving the room. The frail old form seemed almost buoyant. Such is the invigorating tonic of Hope.

Hope! Just ordinary Hope. Ah, what would life be to one of us without it?

Coleen left his office. He was singing a merry tune. It seemed that again he had been made useful. All men like to think that sometime or other, they help to answer some prayer. How unspeakably pitiful it is that too often the prayer is only the need of a little money, less, perhaps, than some men spend during a night of hilarious enjoyment, yet enough to almost save a soul! And it goes on and on and on, ever the same to bewilder the believing and perplex the best of us. And on we go to whatever task is assigned us—perhaps to fail—but,

"Who dares assert your course is run?
The game has only just begun.
There'll be another deal, my son,
And after that, another one."

CHAPTER XIX

DIPLOMATS

WHEN Coleen returned home that night, he repeated almost word for word his conversation with the two men who had spent the evening with him. Both topics interested him. He was grieved to lose his estimable friend, Father Jarenski. Looking back over the years he had known the priest, he felt that he had imbibed much usefulness from his aged friend.

In view of Father Jarenski's many years' service among the lowly, of the immense obstacles and difficulties which he had to overcome, of the art and wisdom which he displayed, and the incalculable value of his work among foreigners, he stood as a figure among the men of Garthage. All men, all denominations, knew him as a friend of man, a saviour of souls, a great philosopher, a man of letters; and he might have been a great business man—but money he wanted for the needy. In the course of his life he worked his way through every social strata. A self made man, he was virtually unassisted in his efforts to advance himself. True, the Church educated him. Privations were numerous enough at the time. His heart was with struggling humanity. He did not lead men—he managed them.

He frequently left a man without replying to what the man had just said. Yet he did this in a way that left no ill feeling; for, likely, when next he saw him, he gave him a safe and sane reply; if not, then it was that attitude which wise men adopt to avoid trifling conversation. While he used to say to his people: "Drive your business; do not let it drive you," he frequently left his

own affairs in a state of chaos. He could tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes or habitation. But, none of this was what won Coleen. What held him to the the man was the priest's innocent and just way of talking to Coleen himself. There were times when they enjoyed solitude together and times when they enjoyed telling tales and laughing. Naturally the retentive memory of the priest was a storehouse of valuable information. Better educated than any man in Garthage, he bore the unmistakable stamp, yet no man was ever made to feel inferior by comparison. He had played his big game and now he wanted rest.

"I am glad, John," said his wife, "that you can help him to go with his sister to Poland. I honestly believe, too, that he feels safe in leaving some of his unfinished work to Zilki. Of course his church will be able to procure the best to take his place, but never, never another Father Jarenski!"

Coleen agreed with her in part. Then he went to bed. Over and over again he thrashed through his mind the working plan at the mills. Everything was rising as if on wing. He felt the exultation of a man who works for something besides mere gain. It was not that he alone had caused the marvelous change; though, in a sense, he wondered if certain plans would have been as successful without his personal effort.

Some men were fighting against the minimum wage. Nine-tenths were in favor of it. Said one party: "What, advance the foreigner and just as soon as he becomes a boss, he hires only his own countrymen, and out goes the American!" In some localities this had been done. In fact it is not an uncommon thing today. But in the business world, with its immense holdings, its enormous business interests, doesn't it look just a whole lot selfish for even a true blooded American to want it all? Why

not encourage the foreigner here, give him an equal chance, provided he becomes an American?

Coleen was thinking the same thing. Quick wits travel fast, they say. His traveled over the town of Garthage. He saw its growth. He knew where to find success and failure. His idea of success was along the lines of business. But to think of many places where the stores showed no business enterprise, as he had found them when first coming to Garthage was, after all, the snag that trips so many thousands a year.

Why couldn't men see this for themselves? There were stores in Ohio, as elsewhere, where the windows were ever the same. No person changed the ware in them, much less cleaned them. There was not a dusted article in the place. There was never a clerk who loved his job or wanted to remain where he was. Often there was the keenest friction between manager and clerks. Why not a complete understanding, a business training to further every purpose? Only that day Coleen had watched a new accountant over at the railway station. A man had left. It being the time to audit the books, it was necessary that the chief clerk get an assistant. This assistant came, a tall, lank, anemic boy. He was sadly crippled in one limb, dragging his almost useless left foot back of him. Yet, at every sound outside the office, he dragged himself to the window to see what was going on outside! Coleen knew the boy. He knew how poor were his parents and the tussle they had to keep a large family. He walked over to the new office assistant and said:

"Son, I want to give you a little bit of advice. I see you are here at this new job and while it does not pay a very big salary, nevertheless, I take it for granted that you, owing to your sad affliction, are looking for something along this line of work, mental and not physical?"

"Well, I have it, haven't I?" answered the boy, rather sarcastically.

"Yes, you have it; but I wouldn't want your chance of holding it, if you mean to stay here and run to the window every time a car passes or a dog barks. Boy, I have as much interest in you as has your own father. I see your handicap. If there is anything in you, do your level best. I'm not hiring you; but I can be one who can fire you and do it without batting an eye. I want you to keep this job, for it has something else coming. What can you get any easier for this cold winter? You are mad. I want you to get mad if it helps you. But my dear boy, this first job is usually a turning point in a fellow's life, and I do like to see a fellow do the best he can. We all fail. I have failed so many times that I couldn't count them, but I climbed up every time."

The boy turned his back without answering. He resented the best advice in the world. Coleen wondered how long he would last!

Then swiftly on the heels of this thought, not very pleasant, was what he had seen in a large department store. It was the harmony in the imported lace department. True, there were domestic laces and embroideries; but it was one department that made the best showing every month. It was solved in no time, the manager, a foreigner too, gained the friendship of every young lady in his employ. He had lived in a foreign mart where he knew everything from the fragile thread to the massive looms. He knew linens from muslins. Educated, refined, genteel, he went right to the depths of his trade. No woman feared his abuse; no woman shirked her duty. If there was a mistake, no person helped correct it more quickly than did the manager. There was an educational foundation or basis for everything each girl did.

If she could not grasp the idea, she was taken from that department and put where she could do the most good. Every woman under his management dressed handsomely without great expense. It was an art. So essential was it for his department that each clerk had to strive for proficiency as well as efficiency and "measure up."

What more was needed right there for success? It was that stronghold which many business men never conceive or, if they do, pass it aside as one of the trivial affairs of no consequence, therefore of no financial benefit.

"A mistake," thought Coleen. "Every department head should be an executive and an expert. If not that, he must study it before hoping to do his best by any concern using his services."

As Coleen heard the clock strike the midnight hour, he dismissed his thoughts.

They that won't be counseled can't be helped.

The following day Coleen recalled his vagrant thoughts of the night before. Somehow or other our best thoughts come to camp with us at night, then depart with the dawning day. The rush of work is like a strong wind whirling autumn leaves across a wide expanse, one reason why most writers have always advised a person to capture his thought while it was close of capture; for there is nothing so elusive as a golden idea when you need it the most.

So the next day, early, Coleen was at his desk. He used a typewriter; but in a manner which honors no noble institution that makes the machinery. He wrote with the rapid fire style that he adopted when a cub reporter. You can break a man of his vices quicker than the slovenly typewriting habit. But he produced his ideas and they made the right editorial.

One of his constant readers was young Weatherby, an assistant editor and a writer of keen originality. He was too young and boyish to be analytical, though his keen sense of justice and his Southern heart (that always warmed quickly to every good fellowship feeling) made him trustworthy and too useful to discourage when, at times, he slipped a cog.

He read several of the business notes that were, in reality, editorial squibs, but not printed on the editorial page. They were office gleanings and every member of the staff contributed to the pot-pourri. It was Weatherby who usually contributed the little items—"He who works or plays—without thinking, is wondering when his luck will change, or, when forming your own business ideals, don't size them up with a magnifying glass." Sometimes it was, "Hold on to your customer with bulldog tenacity." He was not much older than the young man whose chief occupation was that of looking from the office window; yet he had little or no use for a window at all, as most of his work was done under the artificial light above his desk.

"Rounding them up again, Mr. Coleen," he remarked, pointing at the editor's latest editorial. "They will get away, won't they? I remember once when I was working down South, of going into a store to be fitted with a pair of shoes. I always wanted a certain shoe if I could get it and none suited me until I got that or something I liked equally well. The clerk was getting out everything imaginable when I found the shoe, put it on, found it satisfactory and paid my price. As he handed me my purchase, he said: 'Will you kindly give me your name and address?' Naturally I asked why he wanted it and he said: 'So we can notify you when we have something in your number and style that might please you.' Now I left my name

and never expected to go into that shop again, for I contemplated leaving the city; but they did write me a regular two-cent letter; it was forwarded to me, and just because I could not get what I wanted where I went, I sent my order to the firm and got my shoes. You know that is business, isn't it?"

"At any rate it was a free trial," answered Coleen, "and I see they kept pretty close to the trade in just that way. By the way, Weatherby, what did Zilki give the men last night over at the Lodge? I wanted to get there; but I saw him here for a while, then I had a caller and could not go. Get any notes?"

"A few." He took his favorite note-book, some creased scratch paper from his pocket, turned it over, upside down, then crosswise. "Here she is," he commented; "have it sort of mixed up with that shooting affair down at the Dump."

"What's the idea?" Coleen called eagerly. He took great interest in Zilki's work.

"He talked with them upon the sensible idea of working for a salary. And you know he does not often advise a man to travel the alley when there is a clean streetway. He said that the United States subsists on pay checks and on Nature's chief industry, farming. In one place he said that salaries are increasing, which is true in the manufacturing districts. Salaried employees are steadily increasing and working conditions have improved. Just such things as that, you know, broad and sensible. He cited where every fellow at sometime or other wanted to be his own boss and worked for that goal. Well, you know he didn't have to have any great stretch of the imagination to prove that the false idea of superior independence isn't in ownership, but salary. He wasn't afraid to speak of the very small business ventures that get into a

precarious condition while ever expanding salaries offer young ambition a fairer and better chance. One item here says 'A large part of the real prosperity of the United States is found along the upper range of the pay roll.' Shall I use it?"

"Use it? Why, of course use it. That is the kernel of all our work. It is to interest the men in having a pay roll and working harmoniously for unity of success. I think we can do more with the miners in time; but so many of them prefer underground work that their problem, so far, is untouched; and we don't need them anyhow. I don't like to undertake anything among the Coal Company's people, only to relieve a tension if they want it relieved. And just as sure as you live, another strike is coming. I have it on pretty good authority that they are going to board up the mines again. Honestly, that is a frightful condition. I'm much like Father Jarenski who said last night that obviously there is no solution for the problem of unemployment except by putting idle hands to work. This thing of pensioning idle men has some sort of compensation—maybe it is better than turning them loose on the bread line or out to the soup houses; but if there is a way to help them, I don't think we infringe on any man's right to help a man to it. Even little old Garthage can absorb a great quantity of idle labor this winter and get us in line for the work we contemplate. The great trouble with these problems is the fact that either they are only half done or not done at all, and they fade away. Why it's murder to a city's trade not to keep men at work or find work for them. A man who loses his head and finds his heart in these strikes or where there is a cessation of labor, can't win out. How can he? Nine times out of ten a man who is not working, gets into debt; takes flight. It is the

usual thing wherever you find the working class. It isn't that they don't want to pay in most cases, for only too often they can't, and that settles it and the store keeper or merchant loses, who carries him through the strike or while he has only half work. I'll tell you what's wrong, Weatherby, it is the fact that every blessed one of us has the idea that America is a great grab bag and we are going to get something for nothing. You can't talk preventable waste to people who don't want anything on God's earth but a pound of bologna, a dime's worth of crackers and a bottle of polinki. I'd as soon try to teach a tomtit as some of the riffraff we have in this place; but we so often make mistakes to the contrary, that I try it out on each, and, boy, it would surprise you exceedingly if you knew the converts we get. Some people call it one thing and some another, but it seems like promising economy so far, though even Holmes told me at first that my pattern was one of useless extravagance. But I have some binding pledges among the foreigners, and Zilki heads the list. His head is shaping."

Weatherby didn't hear a word that was said about the grab bag. He was dreaming his life away at the moment, wondering if he would receive a letter from a certain girl down below the Dixy line.

He found it on his desk. Ten minutes later he was more than ready for the work at hand.

CHAPTER XX

THE PHILOSOPHER AMONG HIS PAPERS

COLEEN had never forsaken his ideals. His ideals were dreams; but not the vagrant thoughts that wander far, ever returning with empty hands. Contrary to this, his dreams were desires and wishes. They came back with a wealth of originality and, alas, often enough a great burden.

On this day, even a busy one in his office, he was wondering just which subject to take up for his editorial lead. The fresh thoughts were not crowding him. He wanted something different.

In his office he had a glass-topped table. Beneath the glass were hundreds of clippings, as neatly arranged as the pages of a scrap book. It was, indeed, a scrap table, and many persons found it interesting to sit at this table and read the clippings. He frequently removed a sentiment, adding a fresh one. But there was one that ever remained. He liked it. Sometimes he felt that he, instead of Robert Blanchford, had written it. How true it was of his own investigation of places where human life paid the toll for the luxuries of the rich. How true every word of it described conditions that he had investigated in the great sweat shops. Was it inefficiency, greed, ignorance or just the outcome of Nature that cannot attend to everything? Yet that isn't nature, he knew. He walked over to his table, sat down and read the short squib.

"I'd rather die on the high road under the open blue. I'd rather starve to death in the sweet air, or drown in the brave salt sea, or have one fierce glad

hour of battle, and then a bullet, than lead the life of a brute in a stinking hell, and gasp out my broken breath at last on a pauper's pallet."

There was something there for an argument; but he wanted no argument. He had, in a very large sense, been able to bring about a considerable change in the working condition of men. At times he talked with men who opposed many splendid opportunities for an advancement, holding on to false ideas of their lodge rights. When strikes occurred, their dues were increased. The laboring class fell among themselves in the hardest sort of competition. It wasn't to start anything for controversy, quite the reverse, that he wondered just what step to take. He was not a socialist in any sense of the word. He never wanted to be one. If ever a man's hopes and ambitions, to say nothing of his labor, were neutral, he felt that his were. He attributed much of the work, worry and failure of men to ignorance, where it rightly lays. But he could not help believing that the comforts and liberties, to say nothing of the great properties, are laid at the feet of a small number of proprietors, who neither toil nor spin. Somehow or other there rushed through his mind the rejoicing and elaboration of the elaborate tomfoolery of seating a President who, in a few years, is snatched from his throne and is often the jest of the nation if not the whole world. There was something in Tony's birthday party that took on the airs of a Yankee circus and a circus reminded him a little of the coronation of a king; and, assuredly, the coronation of a king was as perplexing and saddening as a run-down American ballet. Socialists, Democrats, Republicans, all for the same thing, not the people; and the people going mad to support the ruler who—but you know! So did Coleen. His heart softened

as he thought of the men who wanted work, homes, children, freedom, life.

"Of what are the thoughts this day?"

It was Holmes.

"Well, bless your life, I'm glad to see you. Thoughts? I'm glad you came in. I'm in fairyland, I guess. I was just thinking about kings and potentates, kids' parties and of people who have solved the secret of the stars and can't live decently and—I was just thinking."

"A dangerous thing for a man of your age. Better take a little ride with me today and let the shop go. You look too serious. As if you had been up all night. Worried?"

"Worried?" Coleen shook his head.

The telephone rang and he answered it.

"What's that? What? When? Oh, pshaw, pshaw! Is it possible? Sure."

He swung away from the telephone. "Two dagos held up the paymaster coming to town, killed him and shot the man with him—over at the turn of the road. Let's take Zilki. Where is that man?—What a shame! What a shame! Yes, maybe it is a false report. That's a lonely place; could do it quick as a wink. Carried the whole pay. And Jamison hasn't had the job three months."

When he was again at his desk, the ugly facts were buzzing through his brain. The men had made their escape all right; but how far could they go? Jamison was dead. The money being in a large iron box, the total weight being ninety pounds, of course, the two men could not carry it unless they had some convenient conveyance to carry it away. Even then, their chance of escape was not likely. Why did these foreigners take such great and terrible chances? They certainly knew the result. It was a stigma of dishonor on every man of the same

nationality who was trying to live honorably. Indeed Coleen realized more than ever the unenviable position occupied by Father Jarenski whose motto of strife was to stop an insurrection in the seething; but who can stop the plotting murderer or any man of low cunning and deviltry? And then he knew that no man can stop it. We can judge and punish. But, after all its horrors and terrible examples, it leaves the innocent to suffer. His heart turned kindly to the thought of thousands of noble mill men who at that moment were in the great mills, laboring honestly for their daily bread. How wrong, how unjust, how unmercifully unkind to judge a whole nation by the few evil doers who come here and leave the everlasting scar of disgrace upon the fair face of a country that has welcomed them, only to discover that it is like taking a viper to its bosom.

Solemnly came that thought, "Judge not!"

He was glad he liked men, all men. After all it was only the bad that men did that he hated; and he was not wavering in his determination to do the best that could be done for the people of Garthage. He now realized his true position in Garthage. It was not as the editor, the business man, or the organizer. It was only too evident that Garthage accepted him as their true philosopher. And the philosophy he adopted was in acts and deeds, not editorials. And men looked to him as we look to our president and our rulers. Back he got to his beginning. The circle was complete. There must be rulers. There must be Presidents, kings and men in power. There ever has been; there ever will be. If people made of it a pageant and a gaudy show —well—let them. Without the leader, where would the people go and what would they do? But he believed in everything but tyrannical monarchy over the man who toils.

And, if you will recall it, wasn't that Christ's teaching too?

Possibly if John Coleen had never been a reporter, he might have escaped his true position. But he had gone where many reporters had refused to go. There were times when he lost his identity in the crowd. He braved the confinement of a prison to learn the living conditions of its wretched inmates; he donned ragged clothes to seek a position of trust to find that ragged clothes, though covering an honest heart, are mistaken for everything but what they indicate. He had stood in the bread line at the Salvation Army with men who were weak with hunger; and were first treated to a religious feast before receiving needful food. Into the terrible sweat shops he had gone and from them to charitable institutions. Many, indeed, were the great factories where there was no admittance. Then he got a job at the place and knew why he was refused as a visitor! He had a good chance to become a pessimist. He was not one. He knew every political "scrap." He knew who mismanages these big affairs and why they are mismanaged. His eager search was not exhausted. That was why a clean man, though poor as the beggar that sat at the King's gate, received his best thoughts. It was—the man!

Everything reverted to Business. It was the biggest plan of life. That being the case, why didn't every man who has his own business, study it from the foundation to the pinnacle? Why not have unity of force with some of the employees? Not to have the whole business plan on a fundamental basis to be wisely governed, was like trying to run a locomotive without fire. Naturally to secure success in business, one must have men and women who will create success. And you can not get them by brow-beating

them, starving them, keeping them in menial line. If monarchs will rule; so will the people in their way. Often their way isn't always the best; for they are too busy with manual labor to study it scientifically. They accept an agitator as their ruler, because he likes to stir things up, and generally succeeds; but where does it lead them?

How grateful he felt that, while being an agitator, he did it for the benefit of manager and worker. He had changed the living condition of almost every working man's home in Garthage. When first he went to live there, he found people living in squallid dens, where there could be no health and no hope, only dogged discontent at their impoverished lives and futile effort at wealth as they saw it possessed by others. No doubt the wretches who murdered the paymaster had lived no better. Ignorance, cunning, deviltry, nothing healthy, nothing clean. Probably it went back generations to foreign parentage that lived and bred in filth. What more can you expect from the vile and dirty hovels where men, women and children live in the same room, and the feeble birth cry is heard as often in such surroundings as the benediction in Christ's Church!

Oh, America, America, with your temples of knowledge, your public libraries, your charitable institutions, your fine parks and public schools—you have hidden scars on your fair acres that hold as great torment as the Hades you have never known, but fear.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MASTER HOLD

THE knowledge that carries men through business is learned. There is in most business men the natural intuition because men learn from practical work, while picking up wholesome ideas by mingling with business men and also by reading. A good and purposeful trade journal, edited by worth while men, is in itself an advisory council that helps a man when often he needs the right spur.

Coleen in his time had seen sluggish office forces snapped up and pushed into wide-awake business men. He instinctively knew them. There was Zilki, young Weatherby, Holmes, several school boys new to the field. He had watched "little fellows" with live brains get in as directors of gigantic wholesale concerns. They were little only in the sense of inexperience; yet so astonishingly full of business that they had to get work to give vent to their pent up originality. This was one reason why he liked the live boy editor. Weatherby instinctively knew the *why* and the *how* of the problems set him by his master, Coleen. Too, he would never be a man limited to one field of work. He would, in time, probably leave the newspaper work, or enlarge his plans while doing both.

The inspiring success of men in Garthage was due to the attention it received. There was nothing else to promote interest. They talked success; they created success; they made you believe in success.

The problems that business men had to face were the complicated problems that all business men must

meet. It was never safe to believe they were free from mail-order traffic; for Garthage was growing, and growing so rapidly now, with the mills and factories on the increase in numbers, offering best wages and good homes, that, at times, it looked to promoters as though they would be crowded for room. It was all they could do to prepare for the new comers; and, with their coming, along came their unenlightened ways of buying. Since Garthage wanted to live on its own fatness, it was the eternal brushing about and stirring up of interest that was as essential as the artery of one's good right arm.

Men studied finance, economics, organization, selling, accounting. They discussed the matter with their help from all standpoints. Sooner or later YOU will meet the same questions. Is it possible you can answer them?

Not many years ago a young man was given a position in an eastern concern where "social influence" got him the position. The general manager, wise to that type, was the one man who had discouraged his coming. When the man arrived at the office, his father came with him. The general manager took the two men, father and son, into his private office. He then sat down to question the fresh recruit. The father watched eagerly for the replies, hoping the boy had the basic principles to give intelligent answers. The questions were hard ones. Not many men could answer them. They were complicated.

Not one did he answer as it is covered in business form; but when he replied to each and every question to the best of his ability, the general manager reached over, took his hand and said: "You have been thinking of a job like this. You have practical ideas. I want you."

Today that young man, not so many years older, has

the presidency of one of our largest wholesale concerns in the United States. Some men say: "He got the job through the influence of powerful friends." He did. But the powerful friends knew just what they were backing when they sent him out.

Coleen was so eager for all men to learn business problems, even when not in business for themselves, that he organized several different business branches at the Community House. Here were mere boys, high school youths, tackling the problems that often confront and trip a man in later years. Everyone was interested in the young fellows and many were the entertainments given to encourage them to success. In a surprisingly short time others joined; then Council went with them through the trade channels. The clever part of it lay in the fact that it all was arranged with the view of entertaining all persons, men, women and children. It was, in a way, a sort of elaboration on our old-fashioned country school lyceum.

So Garthage as a business center stood with head and shoulders above the crowd. She had to grow and once she started to grow in the right direction, she made rapid strides. There were many men and women who were indifferent to Garthage's one strong-hold—Pull for Garthage—but they soon learned (these idlers and triflers), that, inasmuch as they gave nothing, they received nothing. It is the man who shows the business spirit that gains it and even attracts it magnetically. You never yet have found a laggard at the head of any company capitalized in the millions or the hundreds of thousands. They never arrive! But the ones who do—their greatness is their knowledge of business fundamentals.

One reason why Coleen had the master hold was due to his faith in young humanity. He was so eager to

see boys arrive at a place in life where wholesome occupation would save them from idle dissipation. Time and time again he had found very young men sitting idly around the station. Sometimes, as I have heard him tell it, he would say: "There I saw a boy, his eyes fixed vacantly on space, just sitting there and breathing and breathing and breathing!"

He wanted those boys with vacant stares when he found them ready with the light of hope in their eyes and a willingness to do—just something. He knew so well how many, many thousands of boys there are who sit in little towns and—breathe and breathe and breathe. Why? Because there is no occupation. They see nothing to inspire them to work, so they grow dull and listless and many still remain that way. It occurs so often in mail-order towns that we sometimes wonder if, in time, this army of boys without a chance, will look back and hate the ones who permitted the warfare against them.

Someone will say: "There was John So and So who left a little town and today he is president of a large New York bank!" But where one John goes up and up and above the rest, there are thousands that fail.

It is said that no town is alive that is passed up by the traveling salesman. So young people leave sluggish towns and only the Lord knows where they go. If they remain in the town that has received its death blow in business, ambition is replaced by laziness, shiftlessness, and general disinclination to exert any energy or effort which would tend toward progressiveness.

The really ambitious people, young men and women who wish to accomplish something in life, leave the sluggish town and take up their abode where energy and effort are rewarded by advancement. Frequently, this success is bought at the expense of the nerves and the

very souls of the young. This condition being the result of congested centers of population.

These are, indeed, some of the charges to be brought against the problematical profits found in the catalog of the mail-order houses, and they are not financial losses, but moral losses as well. Were it possible to gather all the facts in regard to any small town which suffers from the catalog trading abuses, the loss of dollars and cents could be largely estimated; but the social and moral loss could never be measured or calculated!

This was why the master hand meant to keep the boys at home.

Since the crusade against mail-order houses, there were some merchants who went so far as to withhold credit and favors from all mail-order patrons. They did not do it offensively; but they stated their reasons, and, likely, a barbed wire thrust was felt, and while it took a good bit of grit to do this, for it meant a loss, yet they always gained the patron. In this case competition was helpful.

Someone has rightfully said "that the only thing in this world that a man needs in a hurry, if he must buy it, is a sandwich." This wouldn't go well with Wall Street, the brokers or the anxious southern real estate men; but the idea is this, that practically every commodity purchased by man can be selected carefully and there really is no great rush. You even get three days to order your coffin. You don't have to worry because your local dealer does not have the plow you want or the automobile or the machine oil can. He can get them as quickly, if not more so than you can do it yourself. You have him standing between you and the purchase. He is, in slang phrase, the willing goat. It's all as simple as the first rudiments of arithmetic; but that queer old pride that thrives best in

the brain of the pride-vain man or woman is eternally on the lookout for something new or different and is perfectly willing to take chances of getting it, just to be—different. Many have paid the exorbitant prices. A good, clean, paying peach orchard in Ohio would look like the Garden of Eden beside the white-fire burned orange grove of Florida, that was "exchanged, plus a few thousands" by the owner of the peach orchard who liked the looks of the sunset on the catalog. Too many of us get sunstruck by looking at catalogs!

* * * * *

This was why Coleen's work was a Voice asking the community to rise up in one body and put a stop to the practice, and it pleased him when they obeyed, and dismayed him when they did not; for he despised stupidity.

Local development rested so powerfully on exterminating the evil that again he agitated public meetings with all the best speakers and musicians around to lend local color and harmony to the uplift. He meant it to reverberate down the halls of time; then begin all over again; for you can't fight a monster in business as you would a dove. Like the wounded bull moose, it lies stunned, apparently, until you make closer approach, then, unless you be wary, kills you with its powerful antlers. And business competition has its antlers ready.

A dear old lady who used to be heavenly shocked at the sight of a pack of cards in her house or if she found it in the hayloft, immediately sought out the resident preacher to pray for her seven-up, gambling son, whose playful activities were as harmless as playing with his blocks. She ought to take a look at the catalogs. A deck of cards, if a harmful issue in the home, is like a sneeze during a tornado, compared with the home-destroying

town-destroying, community-destroying mail-order catalog. Burn if you will the old greasy deck; but burn the catalogs too.

CHAPTER XXII

GROWING GARTHAGE

ONE afternoon in early winter, Coleen was walking down the main street of old Garthage. Many men were unemployed. The mines had closed. He was wondering why they did not seek work in the mills. Few of the idlers wanted work for some reason; but it was pleasing to know that most of them had gone to the mills and were happy in their new work.

He met a woman, who was dark, unlovely. Eyes flashed below a pretty forehead, and presently he saw the same eyes grow sorrowful and dull under lowered brows, which told of a woman's life too vexed by care and labor to keep alive her spark of youth. A child, robust and happy, held the mother by the hand. Several children followed her into the house. They were her unkept babies.

Coleen followed her.

"Where is your man?" he asked.

She pointed at the closed door. Coleen went into the opposite room. Lying on the bed was the woman's husband. He turned his head on the pillow and Coleen saw that the man was unusually handsome, but so sadly unkept as to be positively repulsive.

"What's wrong, Mike?" he inquired.

"Ev—ri t'ing, Boss? Why?"

"Out of work?"

"Sure! No work, no mon, no nothin' and nothin' to eat."

"You great big hulk, what's wrong with you? You know you can get work. I can get you a job in ten

minutes. Why don't you go over to the mills and get work?"

"But the Union says not."

"Well, the Union is not keeping that poor girl out there and your babies, is it? You get out of there and go with me. I can get you good work, plenty of it. You can have a good supper."

"Then I go to work for the mill and they fire me; this com'ny no take me back, I'll be worse off'n ever. Mr. Cansby tell me no work, to wait."

"Well, Cansby is an intolerable fool. He has his stores down here and that's all he wants, your money, when you have it. Come with me," he laid a kind hand on the hulky shoulder. "I can get you nice clean work and you'll get your money in two weeks. I'll help you for two weeks, then you must look out for yourself."

"Ain't 'at fonny now, Boss? My wife she go las' night and pray and pray and pray and I say 'Dam' ev—ri t'ing, no pray; no good,' and here you come. I'll go!"

Prospect of work! In the sullen face came a new light. The very form that was cold and hungry borrowed strength from the hope that came to lighten his burden. How strange it was that the friend came when needed the most. His reason was sensible enough. He feared to seek other employment and these fears had been driven into his brain by persons who cherished foolish ideas of their Union.

That man is lost who keeps one mind concerning his respect to the Union. He must waver and retreat in most cases; for he owes it to his family to get to work where work is obtainable, and he owes no Union the same respect. Yet thousands upon thousands hold to the idea of the Union with wooden tenacity.

Coleen took the man back to Garthage. The miner

got work. He accepted the loan of money until pay-day. He returned the amount. Coleen, with the idle curiosity of a man who had done one part of his work, went down to the man's home to see if it had made any change there. That was his aim, to make better homes for the people.

The wife invited him into the house. Now it was a bare and ugly little kitchen, but it was spotless. It was dirty when he had first entered it. With a smiling and yet somewhat melancholy expression in her eyes, a tender look which he could understand, she opened the cupboard doors and he saw plenty of food within. Not a word of English could she speak; but her little daughter, a beautiful child, interpreted for her.

That same morning he went into another home, a home where there was an idle man, no work, not much to eat. He could converse with the little woman, a type of the Roumanian. She was beautiful in her plain clothes, clean and fresh. Direst poverty had not made her succumb to the fate which swallows so many when poverty drags into the home.

"You keep up, don't you?" Coleen asked kindly.

"Yes," she answered, "it was what my mother taught me." She pointed at a blooming geranium in the window. By the side of the crock was a heap of pennies. Mechanically she picked them up and counted them, and then began to cry.

There were forty-seven of them.

With her sensitive and proud nature she felt the shame of her tears.

"It is all right, Mr. Coleen. But I am homesick!"

Undeserved poverty was the portion of this young wife and mother who had come to America and America's promise, on the cheap-labor scheme which has dragged more than one woman to the hell it prepares

for them when it does not offer what it promises. Here was a good woman. On her walls were the sacred pictures she had adorned them with. A cheap crucifix hung by a spotless window. These were the woman's sacred seeking for soothing repose in nature or, probably, oblivion in dreams and prayer. Here was the church lamp whose oil had been consumed to the last drop.

"More work for all of us," thought Coleen. He was glad to get back to his office where the whirr of busy wheels, the clickety-clack of telegraph instruments and the noise of busy typewriters turned his thoughts into a different channel.

He was planning for a big day in Garthage. He was going to make it one of the happiest holidays the people had ever known. Winter! What did he care for that? There are amusements for winter the same as for summer. And it was a plan suggested by no other than Father Jarenski.

"Before I leave Garthage, Mr. Coleen, we must have a jubilee week. I want one day sacred for the people we all know and it will be non-sectarian; then one great big red light celebration for everyone, for I think a little nonsense is just as essential for our people as anything else. I'm eager for it; although Theresa said to me this morning, 'A dying man can do nothing easy,' and I guess she is right. I can't leave here seeing nothing but sad faces. I want to go home, then into Eternity, seeing smiles in memory's dreams."

"Very well, Father Jarenski, I think we can prepare this for the jollification and we will arrange for it before the holiday season. And I have—an idea!"

Many things were growing plain and simple to Coleen with his busy idea of the week's pleasures. He

called in his stenographer, dictated a few letters, then he telephoned for Holmes.

"Are you busy?" he inquired.

"Busy?" answered Holmes. "Rather, my friend, with a mile of cars down on the track full of pianos, and haven't paid off the notes on the last ones. But what do you want?"

"You are not busy. Come down here or I'll go over to your place. I want to consult you."

"Not busy?" exclaimed Holmes. "Much you know about it! Why I'm actually suffering from overwork and worry but my suffering is mostly from a desire to have a good chat with you so I'm coming right over."

"He's a good-natured soul," meditated Coleen, "richest man in town in more ways than one—his good nature is a fortune to him and everyone he meets; but no one would know he was the capital head of this town's finances!"

When Holmes came in he drew from his pocket a few notes. They were for the paper, he explained. He slipped them under the glass-topped table. Coleen saw him; but did not go over to read them. He came right to the point.

"Well, it's just this way: We are planning for a big celebration here, business, etc., and it's all as a sort of a send-off week for Father Jarenski. So we propose to combine a little pleasure with more serious things and you are going to assist us with your versatile brain. Want originality, you know. Don't you think we have a right to celebrate?"

"I certainly do. I'll tell you what we can do, either burn Cansby at the stake or in effigy!"

"Oh, that old salt-cured ham, you couldn't burn him in effigy or in—anyplace. I'd be strictly religious if it were not for that doddering idiot. He is smart. I'll

admit that. But somehow or other I never like to see a smart man do a lot of nasty, dirty little underhand tricks. And he is as full of them as a thistle is full of down. He has blocked me fair and square on some oil land back there, and to save me I don't see how I'm going to even thread my way out. Yes, he's smart. But we can't burn him; so you help out on this scheme. Can't have much of a parade or anything like that, too cold; but we can have entertainments, suppers, dances, and a carnival outfit of some kind."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Holmes. "I'll offer a prize right now, in today's paper, if you say so, to the school boy or girl who collects the most of this year's mail-order catalogs and we will have a big bonfire of them. They are coming in by the thousands now, near the holiday season, and we can create enthusiasm that way, with a prize offer."

"I see that is original all right. We will get up the advertisement today—"

"Then you write it. I don't write my own. The only advertising I ever did was when I was a kid, not more than eighteen or nineteen. I went up north with a fellow of my own age, got stranded, and there we were! We solicited names of business firms and got a small display ad from them to paint on a new wooden bridge they had just built over the creek. We collected our money before the work was done—that is from most of the men. I was back in the town last summer and the men were still standing on the creek bank waiting for Hal and me to return to shoot us! Oh, it was some job of advertising all right and it was my last."

When he had gone, promising to help with the arrangements, Coleen sauntered over to the glass-topped table. He read:

Keep cool in temper; enter into no argument or con-

tention on politics, ethics or religion, with this year's Baltimore oysters.

Never work before breakfast.

Don't work after breakfast.

Lemonade in moderate quantities will help you.

Don't perspire in January.

Be kindly affectionate as St. Paul recommends.

Too often the editorial room is dark, dismal chilly—

Employ a fire-headed stenographer.

Don't forget your oatmeal.

Hide this year's diary.

Don't overwork the undeveloped brain.

Coffee—olives.

Coleen drew out the paper, directed an envelope to Holmes, enclosed the newspaper clipping and returned it to the former owner with a little card, bearing this inscription.

"Come in without knocking; and go out the same way!"

Then he returned to his desk with nerves exhilarated and dancing; for many were his plans for the work that must be done.

The next day he took a trip over to Brannon. He came home by another route which brought him through one of the prettiest towns in eastern Ohio. But, unlike many towns that knew the shock from the mail-order traffic, here was a town that was using every effort to keep up its former prestige, seemingly without avail. What the place must be like in the summer he could easily imagine. There were well kept lawns, everywhere he looked. Flower-boxes, ornamental and beautiful, graced window ledges, holding bits of fluffy snow, caught in the dead branches of vines that once had graced them during the summer. There was the genteel air of culture, refinement, nice homes, many

stores; but—that eternal sameness that lies like a pall over a dead town.

"What is it?" he inquired of a woman he met in one of the stores. He had spoken of the dullness, and it was the busy season in most places.

The woman shook her head. A man idly standing by the counter, looked round.

"We are the victims of business perfidy, my good man," replied the man. "We laid our laurels at other's feet. We still have money in this town; but it is going. This town, sir, is dead. In spite of my pessimism I am an absurd idealist, and because I am perfectly well aware of this, as a rule I never laugh at other people's idealism; but this sort of idealism is really funny, thinking we can live without labor. I'm just a loafer in this store, a mere clerk. I don't love my work. I haven't even a platonic feeling of friendship for it. My mother longed, worked, prayed and did all in her power to establish me in an immense drug business here. You know what that means, the drug business, fifty-fifty, and the town virtually stung itself to death. It's the same with all of us. Why don't I leave? Because of that sacrificing mother. I'd leave now, this minute; but you know after a certain age, a woman does not care to go to new places. Mother has her friends, her church, her little world and we manage somehow to get along."

He left to sell a small tablet to a school girl.

Coleen looked at him. There was a serious man of great capabilities. It showed in the physical man. His was a clean, critical intellect; a man without any false illusions of life. What this man was capable of doing if he had the opportunity was promising; but, as Coleen studied him, and he liked him immensely, he felt that here was a man who would go along with the driftwood

and eventually be cast ashore with the debris of humanity. Too old now to make a new beginning, too bitter against present ones, it was just one more example of a mother's son who had worn out his ambition in his youth. In years he was not so remarkably old. In wisdom he had lived many years.

In a sense Coleen likened the clerk to no other than Father Jarenski. His feeling of brotherly affection for that type of man amounted to something like a beautiful virtue in the heart of Garthage's foremost editor.

He did not talk with the man again. He only remembered him with a sense of pity that any man feels for another when he knows there is failure and that worst kind which the innocent must sometimes endure because of the oppression of others. The Serpent left the trail in the dust which has been a highway for man from that memorable day to this one.

In the heart of Coleen was gladness that Garthage had progressed, that it was a town of usefulness, enterprise and growing industry.

He turned his car into a familiar road; then something tugged at his memory. There, right before him shuddering in the cold, was the memorable place where he had met Natalie, the song-girl of his heart. Quickly he sped by it slightly frowning as if the scowl would drive away the imp of memory which seemed to clamor for pleasing recognition. "That little event," he meditated, "was my one bright candle in the wind, and the light went out!"

CHAPTER XXIII

NEW ARRANGEMENTS

COLEEN and Holmes had branched out in an entirely new direction. They had taken an active part in the fight of the Ohio valley cities to have the U. S. armor plate located at Garthage. Other places were under consideration; but Coleen wanted the site to be right in Garthage. Every available supply could be obtained at home. The new plant would employ in the neighborhood of ten thousand or fifteen thousand men. This would mean an additional population of from twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand to the town or city so fortunate as to secure the plant. Hundreds of plans could be developed if the Naval Board accepted their proposition; and there really was no reason why they should not. West Virginia had its inducements, good ones, but none better than offered by Ohio's fertile hills and mountainous districts, rich in mineral ore, oils and other valuable materials.

Busy as was the editor with other affairs, he never gave up one side of his social work, that of looking after his boys, as he explained it.

At one time, to encourage some boys to go with him to an evening meeting, he removed his own collar, because the loafers gave the "no collar" excuse for not accompanying the editor to the church. "If you don't want to go for religion," he had said, quietly and pleasantly, "then go and be good sports." And the boys went. At another time his attention was attracted by a quartette of male voices he heard in the distance. He followed the sound which led to one of the most

notorious saloons in the place. Despite the law that no singing was allowed in the saloon, these boys were singing of their own volition. It was sweet, the melodies so beautifully harmonizing with each other that something like a human cry came from the depths of the song wasted on the foul air of the saloon.

Coleen entered the saloon. The boys were not drinking. They were lonely boys, good-hearted, with no place to go, nothing, really to give them pleasure. There was a public library; but these were not reading boys; there was also the Young Men's Christian Association; but these were foreign boys and felt lost in the fine, big building. There were theatres, excellent ones in their way; but these boys were not heavy wage earners. They were the type of uneducated lads that you find in barber shops, pool rooms, saloons, blacksmith shops and other easy loafing places.

The next night he found the boys on the street and spoke of their singing in a way that only Coleen had, then he asked the boys to go home with him for supper. They could not believe it. Each refused the invitation; but he insisted. At last they went, like a lot of shamefaced boys who were about to face a cold-hearted judge for some innocent mischief, not right according to law.

Because Julia knew of their coming, long before the boys knew it, she was there to greet them. They held back, sat down, ashamed, awkward, afraid to speak above a whisper. They removed their hats, twirled them between their knees, looked lost and felt very much that way.

"Before we have supper, boys, I want to show you my rigging upstairs." He led the way and the boys tiptoed after him. Coleen pressed the electric button at the door, instantly flooding an immense hall with dozens of electric lights, softly blurred with pale blue shades that gave a

most artistic finish to the blue and walnut-finished apartment.

Here was everything to amuse mankind in the way of an evening's entertainment. The boys had heard of this wonderful hall, a place to them which meant an apartment for stage people or speakers. On a platform was the baby grand piano. Occupying immense space were two billiard tables. The entire store of gymnastic supplies was conveniently arranged and nothing promised a finer dancing floor than the one they stepped upon as softly as if it were some prayer rug of the Ancient Fathers.

But boys are boys the wide world over. Coleen had put them at their ease. He was a boy with them. He had invited none of his personal friends. It was to get at the heart of these youngsters, each at the age when one or all of them might go sadly astray, that he was looking. Never would they forget that first night, which was the beginning of their best years, for times without number they went to that hall, and other boys went with them. They formed a club and most of them owed their working positions to Coleen. But four of them, the leaders, are today the best male quartette in eastern Ohio, or the whole east for that matter; for voices with native sweetness, strength and melody are quickly recognized and somehow or other the most obscure, despised and downtrodden person on earth can come into his own when the voice sings him into the good graces of the public.

There were times when Julia and Sonia entertained the young men. No longer were they the collarless boys of the street. They were busy, ambitious, splendid young men. What they learned from being brought in contact with refined and cultured womanhood was as purposeful and useful to them as all else. They did not have it in their own homes. These boys were of low

birth, possibly many of the lowest origin; but all came into wealth of manhood which is above price.

Were we to hear one of them speak of Coleen today, no doubt there would be that sentiment of appreciation which the human tongue can but feebly express. Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thought nor measure words, but only to pour them all right out just as they are—chaff and grain together, knowing that they will be understood by the listeners! How nice to keep the gold and then, with a boyish laugh, blow away the chaff!

Another of John Coleen's best works. It was no grand affair, so says the world, because no fields are lost and no crowns won. But the high, clear song sent melody heavenward, and boys earned a beautiful boyhood which would have been denied them without the editor's boyish feeling for them.

Father Jarenski always said when Coleen went out on a mission for boys that he was the good Samaritan. "Coleen gives them something of himself," he told his sister. "He gives them human interest, sympathy, love, kindness, something to feed their hearts. He never asks them to pray. He makes them want to do it."

Despite his good work, many, indeed were Coleen's new enemies, men who envied him everything he did. They, in many instances, had nothing to envy save the gracious and loyal spirit that lived in the heart of the editor; but out of every hundred men he was safe in believing that many of them would do him an evil turn if they dared. None was worse at it than Cansby; but that was because the storekeeper, once the richest man in town, had not kept up with the stride. He hated the originality of Coleen. He could not imitate him; but he knew many traps

to set that would offset Coleen's plans. Many he tried with brilliant success. And Coleen wondered why.

While his arrangements were progressing for the gala week, he found his young co-worker enjoying a melancholy day-dream.

"I'll bet you a free pass across the Dixey line that you are thinking of her."

Weatherby nodded his blond head. "You guess right."

"Why don't you go down there and marry her?"

Coleen was sorry the moment his bit of idle talk had passed his lips. One look into the deep blue eyes of the young man showed to the editor that all was not going well with his brilliant news writer.

But Weatherby smiled. "As I am not married, maybe it is as well that I don't disturb the tranquility of my bachelor life as long as I live. I'll keep on. It doesn't matter now whether she has dark, fair or red hair. A wife always grows old and worries a man with useless complaint."

Coleen left him with his lamentations. "And there is a chap worth his weight in gold," thought the editor in all seriousness. "He has a warm southern heart; but, after all, down South love affairs are as plentiful as persimmons. But he has had a jolt, a bad one."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PAGEANT

AFTER all it was Holmes who suggested the pageant as a most befitting celebration. It would be easy enough he knew for every foreign citizen to produce something from the old country to aid them in their masquerade. If unable to carry out the plan, then cheap materials could be furnished. Squads were formed. It seemed that almost every nationality was represented. Then pride swept in, as it will do on such occasions, and considerable rivalry was manifest among the nationalities. Every society and organization included in the program, and outside towns were invited to be present, merged their own interest in the interest of what they hoped would be the parade, provided the night set for it was not too cold. If weather precluded this part of the program, at least they could make some sort of big showing in their Coliseum building. School boys were eager to be Indians. Costumes were rented for this purpose. There were two hundred Quinnipac Indians, with elaborate arrows, Indian shields and fantastic insignia. Girls were permitted and urged to be as pretty and dainty as possible in any costume which pleased their fancy. But one thing was not permitted. No masks should be worn. The mayor put this in his proclamation. He had seen too many abuses of cunning deviltry behind masks, and no person was allowed to forget for a single minute that this gala week was not only a celebration for Garthage and her success; but it was equally an honor event for Father Jarenski. At least eight thousand persons were actively engaged in completing the plans. It had to be done by the people,

for any organization would be six months in completing the work for the dramatic spectacle.

The week preceding the gala event came in with terrific late fall storms, dashing rain, high wind, snow, then slush. No attempt was made to decorate the town. It promised anything but propitious weather. Then, as often is the case, the fury of the wind seemed to drive back the storms, dry the streets and the roads. The sun came out bright and while the days were actually warm, yet the nights were cool. All hearts lightened, at least there would be a few days of fair weather. Business was continued during the day; but all places of business closed at two o'clock in the afternoon. School closed at the same hour. The first evening was memorable, being set for the progress of the nation. In it the whole of Garthage set forth to parade the crowded streets. There were men on foot, men on queer looking papier mache ostriches, boy scouts, vehicles to astonish the natives, many of them of original make and decidedly novel to say the least. Brass bands were divided only by the nationality following them. There were numerous bands in the procession and dozens of gaily decorated automobiles loaded with Bohemian women and children. The foreign born had seized the occasion to garb themselves and children in brightly colored garments brought from the Fatherland or else skillfully imitated in America. It was a time of the liveliest excitement. Possibly the Italians made the finest display. There was something touching in their native vanity and the spectacle presented by the hundreds of Italians, men, women and children, was a strong feature complimentary to the race. Every nationality carried its banner "WORK FOR GARTHAGE...LIVE HERE, BUY HERE, STAY HERE...BOOST GARTHAGE..." or similar terms.

There were dances innumerable and every night there

was feasting at the different halls. No person but Father Jarenski could answer just why it was that every saloon was closed in the place. But he had merely mentioned what might occur if they were open and, as each saloon keeper was a good friend and respected the priest, if not his holy office, so they respected a last wish. The doors were closed. Only good nature was found where only too often the pageant turns to a disgusting spectacle of drunken hilarity.

On Wednesday night the Governor spoke to the business men. It reached all ears however. He touched the mainspring when he mentioned why they must boost their own town. It was worthy of it and the desirability of continuing prosperity was truly manifest in this big celebration. He would not take their time. People wanted to be amused. Still he did one pleasing thing when he asked that different nationalities sing their own country's patriotic songs. These, accompanied by their native music, which was thrilling and truly patriotic, afterwards joined in singing America.

On the night when all were invited to the Schofield lots to see the burning of the catalogs, they were surprised to see hundreds of canvas bags filled with these books, torn to ribbons. This had been done to insure their quick cremation. Thousands of catalogs were so destroyed, after being received at the stations, where prizes were awarded. It was an American girl, Louise Tracy, who won first prize, having collected the greatest number of that year's catalogs. In the field, where the bonfire was to be built, stood the image of a woman. She was attired in cheesecloth of different colors, and the grotesque attempt to be stylish was ludicrous. In her outstretched arms she bore a long banner, bearing the caption, "I buy my clothes from mail-order houses." As the crowd wended its way toward the field, lights were turned

on and flaming Roman candles lighted around her. The spectacle, while only a burlesque, was not without unique attractiveness. The paper litter was piled high around the misguided lady, boys and girls doing the work while every band played "The Star Spangled Banner" which was no louder than the cheers and yells that went up with the flames that fairly leaped to the sky. The crowd fell back. The fire was intense. Posts holding Roman candles fell on the burning heap and sent their red flame in every direction. Bits of small fireworks squirmed out of the blaze and scudded across the earth; fiery snakes leaped upward, wriggled and sank to the ground, nigger-chasers caused yells as they chased the crowds, dying beneath petticoats that were snatched up from the teasing fireworks. Once a blast flew upward, burst into a dragon's head and sank at the woman's feet. Then the fire slowly died down and a most unexpected thing happened. At a distance from the crowd a sheet of flame burst on the horizon. It was fireworks. A waterfall flowed before their enchanted gaze. Other splendid pieces were shown. No person knew there was this part of the program. At least the public was unaware. Then, when everyone was expecting the last piece, there appeared in the heavens a beautiful cross. For a moment there was that solemn tension that one might experience had the cross been a real phenomena in the night sky. Every heart was touched, knowing just why that emblem of Christianity that means everything to the whole wide world should face them in its sweet tragedy, there above hearts that knew no rest without it, or least, its significance. Then it slowly descended and burst into thousands of roses, lilies and palms. Nothing was so beautiful during the whole week. "Surely," said an eager spectator, "this is the last." But, no, a banner unfurled its long length, unwinding

gracefully like a long ribbon held by fairy hands. And there in the sky, high, above them was the picture of Father Jarenski, looking down at his people and where lay the roses, lilies and palms! On the banner they read, "I DID IT FOR HIM."

Coleen turned to Father Jarenski, seated by him in his own automobile. But the priest's feeble old hands covered his face. Tears trickled down that face. "Oh, I can't be worthy, I am not worthy. Mother of God, I'm completely outdone!"

"I'm surprised myself, Father Jarenski, I wonder who did this? But why ask. It was either Mr. Holmes or —why, if course it was Holmes. Look at that man's face. He's the happiest fellow here." At that moment Holmes looked over at Father Jarenski and no person doubted what he had done and why he had done it. It was the final piece. It was the last but one of their one week's celebration. The morrow, Sunday, was sacred. It was Father Jarenski's last working Sunday in America.

* * * * *

"That evening when the Carpenter swept out
The fragrant shavings from the workshop floor,
And placed the tools in order, and shut to
And barred for the last time the humble door,
And, going on His way to save the world,
Turned from the laborer's lot forever more,
I wonder—was He glad?

"That morning when the Carpenter walked forth
From Joseph's doorway, in the glimmering light,
And bade His Holy Mother long farewell,
And, through the rose-shot skies with dawning bright,

Saw glooming the dark shadow of the cross,
Yet, seeing, set His feet toward Calvary's height,
I wonder—was He sad?

"Ah, when the Carpenter went on His way,
He thought not for himself of good or ill;
One was his path, through shop or thronging men
Craving His help, e'en to the cross-crowned hill,
In toiling, healing, teaching, suffering all
His joy, His life, to do the Father's will;
And earth and heaven are glad."

* * * * *

During the final meeting, Father Jarenski spoke of Christmas. "I have spent many of them with you," he said. "I want you to think of me and my dear sister, Theresa and pray for our safety on the high seas. I shall pray for others who are lonely like myself, away from their homes, for the very poor to whom the day will bring little gladness; for the children in America and everywhere whose dream of Christmas may not be a disappointment; for the sick, the sorrowing and the weary. Jesus was born in poverty, found no welcome in the world, and to be content is my wish as that was His."

Father Jarenski did not speak at length. All knew the strain that it brought on his weak physical strength. No person expected a speech. But his last sermon was typical of the man, his love for those who needed it most, his promise of what he would do and wished to do, and the blessing he pronounced on all mankind. "Grant these blessings, I beseech Thee in His name, Amen."

CHAPTER XXV

THE GLAD HAND

TO the utter amazement of Coleen he had a caller, no other than the man he had met in the drug store, a man whose name he did not know, but who knew Coleen's and traveled to Garthage to meet him.

When the editor found the man waiting for him, he was more than pleased. In a way the disappointed caller reminded him of a fine old print, retouched with vivid colors, almost fresh and new in pristine loveliness. It was impossible not to admire the stranger's physical appearance, for not only was he attractive in a physical sense; but there was something in the strong, comely face that looked like a man who had quitted politics or finance at a saving moment and thus spared his pride a fall. There are just such looking men. And Coleen said as much to Mr. Gardner, who smiled whimsically at the compliment.

"It just belies the looks," he retorted, not unkindly, "for it is but the husk after all. Still, I guess it has been somewhat gratifying too. Once, a good many years ago, I was sitting in a lobby with some men and a dapper little fellow, a minister he called himself, seated himself by me and said: 'Young man, I admire you. I want to tell you so. You are the physical man that I wanted to be. I'm nothing but a sickly, no account circuit minister. I have nothing only what is in my head. I'm a graduate of Yale; but I can't get over the sickening idea of my physical imperfection.' Well, he was a little runt all right; but he was an intellectual light. I have never forgotten his hands. I dare say they had never touched

manual labor, for the fingers seemed closely united like you see in an infant's hand. But he had what I wanted, an education."

"But you are educated," Coleen put in good naturedly. "That's your trouble, I judge, educated above the average and sticking in the rut. What do you know?"

The man placed a forefinger against his temple, laughed easy and low. "A little of everything, especially law, a confounded lot about chemistry, and nothing about business. That's exactly why I am here. After that talk with you and what you said concerning the rapid growth of this town, it occurred to me that surely, with what wealth remains in our town, we can do something, have a booster's meeting and agitate something worth while. I see they are agitating it all over the country. I know what to do; but I'd rather learn how to do it from those who have made a success of it."

"I understand," replied Coleen, taking up a daily paper from a pile that lay neatly arranged on his desk. "Now there is boosting and boosting; but, for downright slovenliness of the work, listen to a part of this. Here is a town or rather a city whose reporter gives out a feeble gasp like this: 'City trade boosters, between 80 and 85 strong, were given a warm welcome when they came to M—— Wednesday night and held an informal meeting with the business men in the Chamber of Commerce rooms. There was no fixed program and everyone present enjoyed the meeting.' Now this is followed up with a lengthy description of the three Pullman cars that were made comfortable for the tourists and he has written at length that the men enjoyed a hearty repast. He says the train laid over night and the visitors departed Thursday morning at ten o'clock."

"No essentials," smiled Mr. Gardner.

"Essentials? I see none. That's exactly the fault. I

have discharged men for less offense. What does an article of that nature carry to the public? There isn't a word concerning its importance; yet I know the editor of this paper, know him well, and he allows this society column to go in on a news page! It ought to be in the society news. That's just the humbuggery of articles written rapid fire to fill space. He has sounded no warning, given no business suggestion to the business men, made no reference whatever as to what is up to the wholesaler or retailer, to aid the retailer and you know that is where co-operation must exist to help out every town. You can't promote service that way. What does this article amount to in any sense? Nothing. It takes up valuable space for no use whatever. Riding around in Pullman cars, making speeches to a few men and playing the brass band every ten minutes won't land the job. If I had but one way to work out this problem, I believe I would leave it with the women."

"Women?" Gardner laughed boyishly. "Women? God save the country."

"And why not women? That day I was in your store you made mention of your aged mother, her sacrifice, her hope, her struggle to get you into a store of your own, where you never got, principally because you wanted to be a lawyer and for other reasons; but suppose every woman in your town had that same ambition, was stirred with the necessity of home protection, don't tell me that it wouldn't amount to a crusade and a fine one at that. The saddest lesson I ever had to learn was this: That the fellow who has enough or sufficient isn't worrying about the fellow who has nothing. And the man with nothing may be bright and purposeful, though he is too busy getting bread and butter to be active in business. It has been said that some of the finest business logic that ever made eloquent the lips of man came right from East End Lon-

don, where men live like animals and die worse; but their logic is like the pure and clean mushroom that grows in dark and filth. It is like pressing the soul out of a man to get this logic, and those who have dared their person in its unwholesome midst, risking death or disease, getting only a drop at a time of this logic, have gathered the costly radium of business. A life for a thought. And much of it is wasted on the foul air. You see it is this way: A man can get facts, data, good, sound, reasonable ideas; but it is like driving a nail into steel to get that fact home to the people."

"Well, I understand that," replied his listener.

"But you didn't understand about the women?"

"I'll admit that is a new phase, still it seems that men can conduct their business without the women worrying about it. Oh, yes, I do sell to more women and children than to men—I know I do—and of course they should be intelligent buyers, but I don't think I ever dissected it that way. Then you know I am not successful in business, partly for one reason and largely for other drawbacks."

"There shouldn't be a drawback in your city. The town will dry up and blow up, just as sure as you live if you can't bring the business heads and the buying public to pleasing and profitable relationship. While I was there I learned of several ventures undertaken that fell flat, the least of which was that Adam's grist mill. Think of the flour used in this State, millions of barrels of it; and think of your territory and natural facilities for making and shipping flour. You are right in the wheat belt and you let that business go over the lines in miles and miles of grain trains to the bigger marts, where prices are affixed and you pay their price. And right over in Brannon (you know the place), didn't they do the same thing with their creamery? There they had the whole

country wide from which to purchase their supply of the finest cream in the State. Every farmer wanted to sell his milk to them. They organized for that purpose. Thousands of gallons of rich milk could be obtained daily. The shipping was a trifle inconvenient but really no hindrance to the trade. Why did they lose it? Simply because two of their engineers and three of their butter makers were incompetents. Think of letting a business like that go to the wall, when there are experts in the country to turn it into cash. There were many women who upheld the idea of keeping the trade. They went about it at their Grange meetings and kept it alive for a year or so, after which the men let it drop, sold their excess of cattle, and all but impoverished this part of the country for beef, veal, butter, milk, and cream. Now whose fault is that? I say it is the fault of the sleeping ones who know that a farm makes a man some kind of a living and let it go at that."

"We had a hard struggle to bring in the produce right here. I have seen hundreds of milk cans piled up over at the station, cream going east, west, north and south of us, while we underwent a famine. We were helping the farmers to get good roads, agitating everything helpful for them, and they were not doing a thing for us. We all but boycotted them. But, rather than fight them, we got them here and then we talked business to them. We had statistics to prove that, if they did make two cents more on the gallon, that in less than a year they had lost a fortune. The grand total of these unbusinesslike ventures is unlucky for the parasites, I can tell you."

"Have you an original plan to get at the work?"

"Original? No. Just ordinary common sense. You, knowing the law, ought to know that business can't be loosely conducted, that to hold a little stream it must have many tributaries and not many outlets."

"Yes, of course I understand that; but it seems to me that it is hard to reach the people."

"You bet it's hard! That is the hard part of the work. You can talk, write and sing business logic; but unless you get a hearing you are barking up the wrong tree. It may surprise you, but I think our big deal came in when we got in sympathy with the working men, their wives and families. We started that way. If I do say it myself, this is not a city of oppression, but one of helpfulness. We are like certain lodge orders, stick to the brotherhood, without exacting a fee or any restrictions, save those of mutual interest. Then we went to the heads of every business department, explaining the need of general business appearance in their stores. We had the clean-up work done around every store, mill, factory and business house. This is a clean city. Later the women did active work in civic pride. They stood by their colors when everything went wrong. I know we did have to fight for our own. I think we were the Father of thought in the mail-order traffic. That was what we started out to kill and what, if you will believe me, we are still after. I think we drove home more good facts last week during our gala week here than at any other time. We meant it to fight against mail-order traffic, and we certainly went to extremes to accomplish it."

"Well you know persons are bound to buy where they can get the best results and if that isn't at home, why not some place else?"

"You are right; but we don't teach it that way. We let our business men make it possible for people to do better at home. No person knows the graft there is in doing business by mail until he hunts up statistics and then it is almost unbelievable."

"We never went about this in a haphazard way. We

had to organize business men to have authority in an effort to restore business and protect home industry. Regarding our operations there is no secret; but it was work for everyone in this city. We had to begin all over everytime business brought new home seekers here. And if ever you had any dealing with camp followers, let me tell you they are like sheep, going in all directions, huddled against a storm and far fleeing in mild weather, scattered over all creation, buying at random, selling the same way. Queerest thing on earth, but America is like a kid that can get his bank open with a penknife and starts out to spend the savings. Only today, let tomorrow go hang. Now that we have industries here that plainly indicate there will be permanent citizens, why, much of our trouble is over. It is when they come, buy at random, leave at night and never come back that they help no industry and hurt themselves in the bargain."

"Then it amounts to a raid?" The caller's blue eyes shot merriment from their deep, thoughtful pools.

"A raid? Yes, and you dare not shoot them. But you come with me to dinner, then I'll go with you over the town and convince you that I have not been giving you a line of talk for nothing. And the first place we will go will be over where I started. I'm as proud of Old Garthage today as a little boy with his first sure-enough-shoot gun. It isn't exactly like this end of town; but it can sit up and sing, 'Just as I am without one plea,' for it was saved in a nick of time. Oh, yes, you can go with me to dinner. Never ruffles my lady, always ready for someone. That's the way we live. When I have to cut out the social side of my life and take my man to the club, we won't be happy. I want to show you my home. I think there is just one spot on earth, and that is my home. No, I have no

children. We lost our only child. But you will see a boy who is all the world to me. He lives with me part of the time, in fact, most of the time; but he's a good little Indian and goes home once in a while. And here he comes this very minute. Good-looking? That boy is handsome. 'Lo, Tony, coming to take me to dinner? Well, we are going all right and so is Mr. Gardner."

Tony smiled, squeezed Coleen's hand and trotted merrily along with the two men.

"You'll let me hold the wheel?" asked the child.

"Yes, Tony, you can take us home. Some driver, my boy, only his legs aren't long enough yet to touch the ground!"

* * * * *

CHAPTER XXVI

ANOTHER TURN

THE following week Julia went to Pittsburg. It was during the rush of holiday shopping. She took Tony with her. It was the child's first trip to the big city. From time to time she sent word back of their pleasant shopping expeditions. "We will be home the 23rd," she wired.

Coleen left her to the pleasures which a woman finds at the Yuletide season. Always, save one, had their Yuletide been pleasant. It was her pleasure to make others happy. He never knew and never was to know, how her heart ached for little Paul when other happy children looked forward with all animation to the joy of Santa Claus and their gifts. She had even forwarded gifts which would be sure to reach Father Jarenski and his sister at or near the Christmas day. It was the pleasure of Christmas to her.

Coleen, busy at his desk, took a telegram from Pittsburg. They had arrived daily.

"Come at once. Julia was instantly killed at three o'clock; boy injured. At my home. Joseph Branson."

Coleen jumped to his feet. Something like the sound of breaking glass, a crash, a blow, struck wickedly at him. Was that thing for him? He read it again, then the third time. He laid the telegram on his desk, picked it up, half fell into his chair and sprang up again. He sent for Zilki, and handed him the telegram.

"Stop the machines, boys," he said, turning to the groups of men who rushed to his office as soon as the

word was sent out. "A paper is a paper; but I don't want one published now. This was her paper."

He wouldn't believe it. It couldn't be that the happy, laughing Julia who left him at the station had been killed. And how had it occurred? That it was not exaggerated he knew, for the telegram was signed by Julia's brother. She was dead, the companion of his days and nights! And the boy, the cherub of love in their home, in two homes. How could he give up either of them? What were people doing? Why was it he could do nothing for himself? He felt like a coward going to Sonia. Tell her they must; but what could they tell her? The horror of the stricken mother was terrible to contemplate.

But they did tell her. Then, on the train, three anxious souls, each with a different sorrow, yet united in the terrible calamity, rushed madly on to the great city.

"Julia's dead, Julia's dead," clanked every wheel; the whistles screamed it, a thousand voices spoke and told it over and over. Then merciful night came on, darkness came and the long, long journey was over, only long in the unmerciful anxiety.

It was the result of an automobile accident. The child hovered between life and death. No one, not even the attending physicians, dared say he could live, while in the room below was all that earth held dear to Coleen. His wife, his companion of years, the mother of his only child, the girl he had chosen from the whole wide world. How could he go look on the face that would smile him no greeting? How could be believe that all was well. Where were his tears? Why couldn't he go away into the deep of some forest and scream? Why why, oh, why must this come to him? What had he done? Was it the law of life or the vengeance of Fate?

Julia, his Julia! Kind nurses were leading Sonia away. Her stifled cries were the heartbreaking sobs of mother love. Death in all its sorrow is nothing compared to the uncertainty of life. We reconcile ourselves to the inevitable; but when life hangs by a mere thread of chance, who can describe that grief?

Zilki put one arm across the shoulder of his stricken friend where it lay. Neither man spoke, then, like a hurt boy, Coleen turned, and it was Zilki who caught him. All the bonny, brown curls could not hide that death blow on the white temple! A blow on the fine white flesh of her who knew nothing but love and caresses. A death-dealing blow at that!

There was a quiet hush in the household. Coleen followed the men into the hall, then he turned, walked back into the room, closed and locked the door.

Alone!

Pitifully alone!

And no one disturbed him. He was left alone with her, his shattered dreams, his companion of earthly love!

* * * * *

The weeks following the tragedy in John Coleen's life found him working without one incentive. What was it for? Like a man who had reached a great stone wall, he stopped. Why try to push his way through that wall? Surely there was nothing beyond that he needed; certainly nothing that he wanted. There had been a time when his point of view was unlimited, as often is true of every ambitious man, then suddenly cut off by a lowly grave.

He returned to his work but to tell the truth he did not work. He closed his big house with its mournful-looking windows. He lived in a hotel. The only person on earth who did interest him was little Tony. Coleen's heart bled anew when he saw the little fellow,

still walking with one arm stiff and useless. "It's getting better, Daddie, so don't worry. You know it doesn't hurt me any more. And, Daddie, it didn't hurt me then. It all came so awful quick."

Coleen nodded his head at these familiar remarks. He heard them often. The intuition of the child sensed that in a large measure his own illness made his best friend very sad. He visited him every day; but his little room up at Coleen's was closed. His playthings had been taken away. He had missed one Christmas in his lifetime that he was never to recall.

Coleen had heard from Father Jarenski. He and his good sister had arrived at their former home in Lodz. He answered the letter, telling of the sorrow in his life; then he got his business affairs in shape, called Holmes and told his friend that he was going away.

"I don't know where I am going. I'm going and I may not come back for some time. I can't stay here. I haven't a spark of life in me. I feel like a shell or a dry husk."

Holmes did not reply. His eyes followed the geometrical line on the rug in Coleen's office. What could he say? After all wasn't it best that Coleen should leave the town? It would be almost as sad for him upon his return. Holmes realized other conditions that took the editor from the busy mart of trade. Death would in time lose its sting. If it did not, all humanity would be driven to wildest distraction; for who of us escapes it? But there was a man, without any known relative and as most men work for some person, here was one who had enough money for his own use and could be most liberal with it, though every human interest was cut off or closed, like the clogging of life's greatest artery. He had no ambition, for nothing

stirred his ambition. Month followed month and still he had no ambition.

It now was early summer. The lethargy choked him, loneliness paralyzed him. He put his business in the hands of a competent attorney and left.

For several days he traveled Eastward, then he lost himself in the whirl of New York. He looked sullenly at its gigantic struggle. It interested him without creating any desire in him to become a part of it. He knew there was a woman in that city who loved him, who always had loved him. He dismissed all thought of her.

He left New York for Chicago. He went to San Francisco; then, by the middle of June, he turned about and set out for a long sail upon the seas. Like a magnet that draws fine steel, he headed for the great unknown. In mid-summer he found his way to the humble home of a friend.

Had an apparition from the unknown world stood in that arched doorway, with its sunken tread of stone, it would have caused less sensation than did the appearance of John Coleen at the humble home of Father Jarenski.

Theresa sprang up, making a noise like that of a clucking old hen. Father Jarenski stood rooted to the spot. Quickly realizing he was not dreaming he took the hand that Coleen offered, then embraced him with both arms and kissed him a hearty welcome, a form of welcome so common yet so meaning among the Polish.

How wretchedly poor they were! Poverty stared at Coleen from all sides of the old home, the property of the Jarenskis' for many, many years. The humble board, uncovered, set with the rudest dishes, plainest of food and a scarcity of that, bespoke eloquently of two precious old people, merely existing until the final call.

Theresa could not converse with Coleen. She had been dull and stupid at all times on account of the unfamiliar language she heard in America, though Coleen learned that she could talk with any person in Lodz, where there was no native tongue, but a mixture of Russian, Dutch and even French, many, many different nationalities, and each, it seemed, speaking differently. But her brother interpreted for her. She listened attentively. She was pleased; yet she showed that woman's pride that knew the great difference between her home and the one she knew Coleen owned in America.

"Tell him," she spoke to her brother, "that he will fare poorly here; but no person is more welcome." Father Jarenski repeated what she had spoken. "You see she is just like a woman, and must refer to this plain home. But I'm perfectly satisfied, John. And when I think of my noble father, my spirit mother and the best of ancient and almost forgotten grandsires, I know the house has sheltered finer men than myself, so welcome, welcome, a million times. And you can rest upon my bed."

Coleen was pleased. It made his heart glad. If the house was poverty stricken, at least it was clean and without was a garden that made a riot of color, blazing in the hot sunshine.

" 'Tis glorious," he said, pointing at the sea of bloom before him. "You often told me; but I could not believe it. And never have I seen more beautiful flowers."

"We are fortunate in having this small court. Not many have been so fortunate. And we bought it, or my great grandparents purchased it almost a foot at a time. Strange is it not? But so terribly has this little province been oppressed that I wonder there is

one man with a place to lay his head. So many wars, so much struggle for supremacy, so much bitter contention for power, merely to feel the pleasure of crushing humanity with an iron heel. I wonder, oh, how I wonder what joy it gives those who spend their lives to obtain what they can't take with them?"

That night, stretched out on the flat, cool mat, surely the best bed in the house, Coleen went to sleep. It was the calmest rest he had known for many months. He slept throughout the night and was ready to learn of life in the strange country as soon as he was up and dressed. The early dawn showed more plainly than ever how destitute were his host and hostess.

"Thank God, I came," he thought. "Now I have a mission and I can make them so happy."

Each day Coleen and Father Jarenski took long walks. There were times when he ventured alone, because of the frail health that kept the aged priest at home. To Coleen it was wonderful to listen to the interesting stories. Often they were humorous, for Father Jarenski had a most retentive memory and, now in his old age, living in the past, his boyhood days loomed gloriously before him. He told of escapades, many of which Coleen felt belied the nature of the grand old man. At best he had been all boy. He chuckled over many a narrative, and when Theresa saw them, looking more than stupid, her brother would tell her why they were laughing; then she would remember, laugh too, and tell him to narrate some other humorous incident.

There were times when Coleen went forth with just one purpose. He came back with many wonderful packages. There were many mysterious trips. Again he would slip money under Theresa's bowl, and while that good woman would return it, she always became its owner and this, she, poor soul, hid, keeping it against

the storm that might break when, alas, she feared they would fare less frugally.

"Tell your sister to spend the money," Coleen said. "Father Jarenski, I may as well tell you; but you and Theresa are now my children, and just now I am in the mood. I shall not leave you until your home is made more comfortable for you. Being absent from it so long it naturally needs repair. I'll have it done for you."

"But—"

"No interruptions. I don't propose to put any glass windows in any cathedral as a memorial to the best woman that ever lived; but I am going to make your last days easy and I do it for the memory of my dear Julia. Don't stop me. I have had everything stopped in my life. I'm living again. I do want to do this. I can relieve that tension in your life, and I hope to do even more—to save Theresa's eyesight if she will consent to the necessary operation. It can be done, then your lowering shadow will be lifted."

"Then God *is* good," whispered the old man. "How can I tell her the glorious news? We have a small pension, oh, so small; but it would keep us while we live, provided I live the longest; for it is mine and ceases with my life."

"That will be different too. I'll see to that. You won't want much and when you need it, you will be able to get it. The way you toiled and struggled for your people, the sacrifices you made, and, honestly, Father Jarenski, you were the poorest business man, gave everything away, and went without yourself. Call it the religious spirit if you want to; but I have discovered that old age has very little consolation or comfort even in prayer when the day brings nothing new and digs deeper into what a man has. I've seen too much of that in America. Thousands of old men and women

are tottering on the eve of eternity, living in charitable homes with children going to visit them, riding in automobiles."

"I know. I know. Life is going on at a furious pace in America. I believe that Pandora who was sent to earth with her mysterious box containing all the ills which flesh is heir to, certainly went first to America, there to leave her goodly store of covetousness. It is her malady."

Coleen did not dispute the remark. He had wandered far that day, frequently speaking with persons in what language he knew, for he had picked up quite a lot of different lingo at Garthage. "Why don't they understand me?" he asked that night. "I've talked to the grandchildren of old John Sobieski, some of the offspring of the veteran Russian General Suwaroff, run into youthful fellows who look like modern Kosciuscos but I don't think any two of them speak the same language. I even looked for someone to tell me about Napoleon making his Moscow campaign; but," smiling, "it's worse than little Garthage when I first struck it. Why don't you all talk Polish and be done with it?"

"It might be a good idea; especially when not many men or women can read or write. We are sufficiently brilliant, yet extremely dull in a scholastic way. Queer old world!"

One evening Coleen was walking slowly homeward. Before him was a young boy beating a beautiful dog. The dog lowered his body until the hairy belly touched the ground, yet he did not flinch. An ugly scar, dripping blood showed on the temple.

That crimson streak on the temple!

Coleen leaped at the boy, clutched the stick from him and held it menancingly over the sullen youth. "You little devil," he yelled. "I'd like to pound you

that way." But the boy did not understand a word, only the angry gesture. He backed away, scowling and several boys came up, looked at the dog, then at Coleen and seemed surprised that a foreigner should be expressing so much sympathy for a lean, half-starved dog.

The animal still cowed to the earth. The blood trickled down its face, making red the beautiful white hair that fell like white curls over the glorious neck.

"You beauty! Your poor starved, abused dog." Coleen who loved a dog, cajoled this one to its feet; but, even then, the dog looked backward, seemingly, for the brute who had been his master.

"Come on," coaxed Coleen. "If you can't live here, you can in America. I own you now."

The dog followed him. True he was starved. The great frame seemed to be only a mass of bone covered with a lovely hide that was not its own, but belonging to a larger dog. The pitiful wreck! Coleen kept his promise for he took the dog home with him.

Well fed, housed, his bruises washed and tended, the dog lay contentedly in the sunshine. He realized there was a new master. That night Coleen felt the cold nose of the dog against his warm hand that lay on the side of the bed. "Brutus," he whispered, "I'm here. You can't get rid of me." The dog stood by him for several minutes, then sank to the floor and slept the only comfortable sleep he had known for many a day. When his master found him the next day, the dog came up to him, leaning heavily against him, seemingly still asking for the same protection. Coleen felt that, in all the whole wide world this was all he really owned. His right hand caressed one of the white silky ears. "You beauty," he whispered, "I suppose I'll love you and lose you."

He looked at the ugly scar. The terrible reminder.

Was that why tears came into eyes that had been as dry and painful as the heart of the Great Sahara?

It is when men can't weep they suffer the most.

CHAPTER XXVII

FOREIGN EVENTS

WHILE the titanic scuffle was going on in Garthage to keep the nation from having its pockets picked by the unscrupulous, Coleen was in Lodz, a very sick man.

He awoke in a dazed way, gazed at a picture before him, a girl—or was she a woman?—sitting on a low chair with its four squatty legs spread far apart. Her head was leaning slightly toward the left shoulder, for she was asleep, and while the old chair was a dull, ugly brown, back of it was an open window, filled with glorious sunshine, forming a silver background to the fair vision of a woman who might be twenty-four years old, though her appearance belied it. The small head, covered with golden curls, a type of the fair Polish women, was partially hidden by a handkerchief, white and yellow, that was not ungracefully wrapped around her head and knotted back of the left ear. The face was faultless, and the pink of her cheeks and lips reminded Coleen not of flowers, but of that wax-like pinkness he had seen in candles, not the prettiest comparison unless you study that particular pink which is most beautiful in the colored candle. The mouth was infantile in outline, as were the small white hands; yet the figure was quite matronly and the white kerchief crossed over the bosom of a yellow frock, billowed softly over the fullness beneath. Health, beauty, witchery presented themselves in the picture, making most glorious the rude wooden window which was nothing but a square hole in the wall which closed at night with a wooden shutter that was bound together with

strips of rusty iron. Yet, in every respect it formed a frame for this picture which no artist could paint, for here was indeed the embodiment of all that was perfection and where cheap colored cotton graced a humble woman's lovely form as no satin would bedeck the queen elect. A shadow passed over the window and instantly darkened the glorious hair, when it shone just a trifle reddish. Coleen who greatly admired the auburn type of beauty was wondering if this head of hair was golden or red when he saw Father Jarenski coming in at the door.

"You have been very sick, John," he said, laying his big cool hand on the sick man's forehead. "Nature has made you pay toll for your hard work in Garthage the past few years and for your recent trouble. We," nodding toward the girl who was prettily yawning herself awake, "have done our best for you. Katrina is her name, and while she cannot understand a word you say, yet she is clever and we shall get along nicely."

"Who is she?" asked Coleen.

But Father Jarenski did not answer, possibly not having heard the inquiry. The girl looked at her patient. Plainly she was a nurse. She smiled pleasantly and the parted lips were almost babyish in forming the whimsical smile. She left the room, followed by Brutus. Coleen could not believe that he had been sick for some days. Even Brutus had rounded out beautifully, showing what good food and kindness will do for the canine member of one's family.

When the girl came into the room, softly as the very shadows, she carried a blue bowl, certainly not the rude earthenware used in the priest's humble home; but a china bowl as light as paper, clear and unquestionably a valuable article. In it was some soup. Coleen despised soup. His taste was gone which was fortunate

perhaps, for how could he refuse anything from that Dresden bowl poised by hands that were dreams of beauty? Even the spoon was an unfamiliar object. The long delicate handle was dull silver filigree, the bowl a shining silver of delicate shape. How an American woman would rave over this spoon! He sipped the soup which he did not want. He took everything she offered. Once he looked at the soup and said, "soup." She looked perplexed. Father Jarenski interpreted for them. "Tell her I shall teach her certain words and she can teach me." He wanted so much to converse with her.

Later in the week she knew the names of soap, towel, comb and familiar objects in his room. Many laughable mistakes were made, as when she gave him broth, calling it a towel. She learned rapidly, always taking delight in saying something in the English language. Coleen could talk Polish, but not fluently and he always yelled which made it seem very funny to his nurse.

Theresa was still in the great hospital. This was why the nurse was called in attendance to care for Coleen. Yes, Theresa was doing very nicely, the cataracts were removed; but she had undergone a severe shock, owing to her age, and while she was recovering, yet she was not able to return home and her eyes were bandaged.

"It is too bad," Coleen said to Father Jarenski, "to think I came here and took sick. Only twice in my lifetime have I needed a nurse and each time it has been under your roof."

Coleen was thinking of the nurse. Here was a girl, a jewel. It was too bad that, young as she was and so beautiful, that she could not be properly educated and rise to her true niche in the world. As it was, she was like a wonderful diamond in a brass setting, and

she could be a clear gem in platinum. It struck his fancy that here was a girl, if Americanized, who would suit Swearengen. How that chap would love this beauty. And how he would resent having his best friend select a Polish maid for his wife! But, of course, Swearengen did not know. He was never to know; for that chap had already wedded. Coleen knew it later in the day, when he opened his foreign mail and found not only engraved invitation, "At Home" cards but, best of all, a cartoon, cut from his own paper, entitled, "Lohengrin, Sweep Out Padded Cell, 7,863." It showed Cupid hook Swearengen from his desk with a photograph of his bride appearing in the smoke of his cigar, and an open door leading into the matrimonial ward. Coleen laughed. How glad he was. There was a chap worth while and he was glad the bride had considered Swearengen's fifteenth application to be her husband. It was the only girl and of course she was a type of the Southern maid. "I wonder how she'll like Garthage?" Then Coleen opened his letter from Zilki. It was huge. It contained clippings and also a letter from Tony which had to be interpreted. But it told of a brand new baby brother and while the baby had no hair and not a tooth, couldn't talk, walk, or play, yet Tony liked it very much, only he had traded it off to Holmes for a dime's worth of peanuts. It was good news, everything was good. He would soon return to them. But, and his old sorrow returned, "Dear God, to what do I return!" he wondered.

One thing was good news to the editor, he learned that Garthage was "Getting the Habit," that a sort of savage delight in doing as they pleased with the community's money had reverted to usefulness. He told as much to the priest.

"My boy," answered the priest, who frequently ad-

dressed him as a boy, "you can see the use of it. Look around us here in Lodz. True, Lodz does prosper in a way; but what way? Only where there are persons to conduct business and do it intelligently and systematically. Cupidity takes the place of intelligence in many business houses. Graft is a ruling passion. Here we have the honest Jew and the unprincipled Jew, the thrifty German and the dull German, educated and unenlightened. Not one man in fifteen can read or write. The Polish are like all others; yet, go where I will, do what I will, I see the same hand of oppression here that you encountered in America. How will it end? God only knows. With business in this state, with so much illiteracy, it looks as if we were in herds. I predict and always have, that this will again be a great and terrible battle field. I have sensed it for years. It is brewing. You can tell it and warn the people, but they'll do nothing until it falls upon them in the night. It will be like wolves in the fold. How can unenlightened men act intelligently when this will occur? They will follow a leader, though that leader takes them right into the jaws of death. Poor stricken Poland, I know its fate. I'm a coward, too, Coleen, when I think of what we may expect; for I know how useless I shall be, and I hope my time comes before I see the carnage which, ere many years, will strip this country to the bone. It is coming. Remember that!"

The old tale again, in a way, of America, a country swollen with riches; everlastingly reaching out for more. A bloated servitor of the Great Finance could sit at a desk and control the wheat market, the most necessary commodity of the nation, making his sixty thousand or even his million in a few days, sometimes in a few hours, and the poor public paying the price of his cupidity, a lawless trick, upheld by the very President,

his cabinet, and all office holders headed the same way. No chance on earth to break up the political ring that permitted this tax on the public. No instinct among the herd to offset it. No economic program. Rolling in riches were countless concerns, like the mail-order houses that sat back and laid hands upon officers who dared to squirm against anything the mail-order concerns wished to do and were going to do. What was the moral? There was none. A vigorous stock boom was not and never has been a criminal offense. Somehow or other it is greeted with applause when a man grows suddenly rich and countless others go down in the whirlpool of bad business ventures. The ticker argues nothing for the little fellow with the plow, the lawn mower, the hammer and hatchet. It ignores the chap with the trowel, the spade or the scythe. It is a single business concern in America and if you are not in "the ring" you are without; to be without you can't promote vast trade activities where political factions have any sway against the best formulated plans ever conceived by the brain of man, with honesty at the helm! But the tables were turning.

Now deny it if you can.

Coleen was glad when his nurse returned to him, bringing in a small dish filled with ice, a sort of cool, limelike sourness frozen into miniature balls. It tasted deliciously and he loved to watch her gathering up the frozen balls on the silver spoon. He might have fed himself now, for he was gaining strength; but she evidently wished to hold her office.

One day she came in carrying a lusty-looking infant. It was crying as only a very cross baby can cry. She perked it up, shook it easily, like a feather pillow, then screamed at its funny antics.

"It's her baby," explained Father Jarenski. "Oh, yes,

Katrina is married. I thought I told you. She says to tell you that Josef is quite human, though she knows you can't see anything but the ruffle on his cap and his esophagus!"

"Tell her he is a dear" Coleen said it enthusiastically; yet something like a quick shadow fell on his heart. His wonderful Polish nurse was married! He wondered who was the lucky man. But that was to be answered without asking.

"Katrina is married to a young deputy. He is a fine fellow, only, like many of our men, he drinks to excess; but she does not seem to care. Such love, such devotion, such wonderful pots of noodle soup. She will live it all right for a time; but her romance will fade about the time that the third baby comes and her husband hasn't reformed. Yes, she is a beauty, so was her mother. That mother has thirteen children. They are unmercifully poor; but you never saw handsomer children than hers in America.

"I'm honest about it, I think I never saw any woman so beautiful in America, though I have seen some of our famous beauties. It isn't exactly her beauty, either; but something of that great big bigness about her. Why can't a man appreciate anything like her?"

"I do not know," answered his listener. "I saw her mother only yesterday. Her figure is gone and I saw silver creeping into her golden locks, just the color of Katrina's. I do think that Love has eyes for these signs in a woman, the hallmarks of time, despite the fact that she was true and patient throughout the years. All that her heart could give was given to her husband and the children they had. She served; smiled through some great privations, always it seems prior to the birth of a child; scrimped without being able to save, measured her needs with his capacities, gleaned happiness from her

babies, found rainbows in black skies and lived to be a faded creature, unloved by her man; but to man's memory of woman, I say she is always the best, therefore the loveliest of women in all the world!"

"Father Jarenski, you were an old dunce not to get married!" Coleen laughed heartily as he said it.

"Well, John, sometimes I thought that myself. I have tried to save souls, not make them."

"You might have been engaged in both," retorted Coleen. "I have looked at you a thousand times, thinking how some woman could have worshipped you for your physical and mental loveliness, and I have pictured you out in the world, far, far from the priesthood. I have all reverence for your profession and I know you don't despair. But, honestly, did it pay?"

"Pay? A million times yes! I have mounted lofty places and have gone to terrible depths; but, if I could make my choice over, having done what I have, and gaining so little for myself, I'd go along, bearing my yoke. It was a labor of love, not of sacrifice. All that I can see in it that has the least tinge of regret, comes to an old man like me who is nearing the grave, as somehow or other a man would like to lay his head on a good woman's breast when he closes his eyes. I think of my mother, a saint in Heaven, and I want her. I want no other. We men have many ideas of women. I have been in a position to know the heart and soul of womankind and, John, I haven't missed much. With all regard to womankind and my angel mother, even patient old Theresa, I must admit that women don't measure up to man's holy expectations; and goodness only knows to what depths we sink in the women's estimation; but I dare say to bottomless depths. Humanity is a failure in so many respects, that I'm not sorry that I let my life drift along without an eternal war-

fare with myself and some woman to find but fleeting happiness in this world. Life goes by swift machinery now. Conditions are worse. No young man dare ask a woman to accept what his mother started with; for she won't take the modern pace. Katrina has; but she will be tired to death of it in less than a year."

Coleen meditated that this might be true. Here was a girl of the humblest peasantry, yet big in her womanly way, and there were some men who would worship at her shrine of beauty and die of eternal regrets. She belonged soul, body and all to a young man who possibly admired her physical beauty. He thought nothing of the sorrow he might cause her by not being true to himself. In time she would drift along as did her mother, looking with blistered eyes from a humble doorway for the sight of a mere man who had been basking his old age in the smiles of a paid siren! And of this, Hell offers nothing so tortuous as love grown old and replaced with something worse than death, knowing that time will not alter it, but will only increase its torment until the fuel of desire is burned to a white ash, flickers in a flame, then goes out.

And this is love!

It took his thoughts back to Natalie. He had loved her at a moment in his life when an aching void accepted her. The very love that blossomed all too soon and perished at once was something he recalled with sorrow. He was very sorry the record of his own misdeed was on his own book of life. It did not make the embers burst into flame. He saw the gray, gray ash. Would her husband always love her? Were they very, very happy? Was there a child? He thought of something she had given to him, a miniature marble bust of himself, true in delicate outline and colored by a master's touch. It was work done by an Italian sculptor in Gar-

thage, a man who has since found fame and fortune making those little images for mere pastime in Garthage. He had been a gardener on her father's farm and she found him clipping wonderful rose baskets from fine white soap. He had hidden them and was frightened when caught in the act. He loved to do it, was his explanation. His father and grandfather made the beautiful work that was sold for use in fine cathedrals. It was then she purchased him the proper materials and set him to work making delicate ware for her art cabinet. She suggested the miniature head of John Coleen to be done in marble. Completed, she did not like the ghastly clear whiteness of it; then it was tinted, the flesh colors blending to a delicate and natural tan with the pinkish flush of youth on his checks. A vagrant strand of hair swept down the middle of his forehead. The powerful shoulders held the studious head in a slightly bowed position. It was natural as life; yet no person had seen it. "That," said she, as she handed him the gift, "looks just like you the day you said to me, 'Natalie, if ever the time comes to make good with you I will,' only I meant it for a studious pose, as you sit at your desk, thinking of great problems."

It was hidden away. Not for anything would he take it from its sacred wrapping in the box. He had never accepted her idea of its beauty. It was his soul carved in marble, against everything fine and divine in him that could never make good. And—he wished he could. Vim, vigor and victory are great things in a man's life; but how often they are unsought when pretty lips woo a man into a labyrinth of love, desire and endless trouble! Natalie was the fire that burned, scorched, consumed. She was color, light, heat, music, song, magic and desire. Julia was contentment, satisfaction, glorious and noble womanhood. Of the two women, the wife was the

finer woman; but even the memory of her did not efface what had occurred when Coleen met Natalie that day in the woods and the world took up the echo of hearts when a bow was touched to the silvery cords of a fine violin. The music belonged to the spheres, and he knew it, but would not recognize it.

Outside he heard the curfew bells. Evening descended. Had he been able, he would have gone out to see the sunset over the garden of scarlet flowers. Katrina came in, laughing and tugging at a man's coat tail.

Coleen knew the man was Katrina's husband. The big, shy fellow, sunburned, towsled headed, good to look upon, spoke and shook hands. He was a likable man and as sober as a judge in a criminal court; but he was awkwardly uneasy in the presence of the strange man and showed a gladness to make his escape. Katrina shooed him out with her white apron, made a curtsey, blew him a kiss from her white fingers, then turned her smiling face away.

The following Saturday her services were over. She took her fortune with her. How liberal had been the good American! Her husband thought likewise, for that night he came home as drunk as a fly from a cotton gin of Mississippi.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DICTATED, BUT NOT READ

COLEEN read his personal letters, then turned to some home newspapers, selecting one of his own papers, possibly from habit. He had not read many pages of current news without resenting some of the articles. In a way they were all right; again it struck him that his editor-in-chief was soldiering on him. The paper had that disreputable appearance of the advertising sheet, "Dictated, but not read."

He said as much to Father Jarenski, handing him the paper.

"Can you understand any business that will permit anything going from the main office like the letter that is signed with a rubber stamp and bearing the insulting remark that it was dictated but not read? It may pertain to some rush matter; but who on earth wants to do business with a concern that is too busy to look after its private or business correspondence? I know my paper needs its personal touch. When I get back home I shall give Weatherby a try at the editor-in-chief job. I don't like this machine correspondence chill in any paper I put out. And, to tell you the truth, I don't want to go home. I feel as if I were coming out of an October Indian haze. I want to feel clear headed when I go back."

Again he turned to his paper. One item was interesting. His oil wells were promising, two were real gushers; but—and he frowned, on one oil field he was blocked by the enterprising Cansby.

"Pretty good play," he explained to the priest. "He

did exactly what I did to him and I guess we both have land tied up for our heirs unless we both come across and let down the bars. I thought I was very clever and had options and the like to give me a good outlet; but I see he has me blocked. He hasn't done a thing I didn't do myself, only I meant it as a temporary affair. Cansby is shrewed, isn't he?"

"I don't think so," answered the priest. "He is a sort of selling campaign in my eyes. He reminds me of a man going around with somebody's personality on for a cloak. I never understood Mr. Cansby. You know when a man has a lot of stores such as he has and when you write into any of the houses and get a reply from no person in particular, and must try to hunt out a personality within it, and don't find him, I can easily surmise that something is wrong. Cansby started out all right, I understand; but as soon as his store doors became a gateway to bigger money, he bestowed on executives the authority to go ahead and when anything goes wrong, you simply can't trace the culprit."

"A sort of a mail-order snag," Coleen remarked.

"On that order, and, I suppose, a most important one for Mr. Cansby. It's queer how things go in America."

"I always felt that Cansby resented my going to Garthage," Coleen remarked. "For a time he met me kindly and graciously. But I was not there very long until I saw through the veneered friendship. I have wondered many, many times if he had anything to do with that murderous attack on me."

"O, I never thought that," said the priest. "I never did think so. That was an affair hatched among the saloon-keepers or some of the men who resented something you did. I had several clues, followed them up,

always without success. When idle men get to enjoying imaginative comparisons, then is when mischief is brewing. The man who courts it is a trouble breeder. I expect Mr. Cansby has some good qualities; but they won't leak out this year."

Coleen turned to other papers. Nothing important was chronicled. He saw a feeble attempt to strike at the mail-order trouble; but it was neither strong nor convincing. And he wondered why. Evidently the writers were not afraid of going ahead so long as the animals were caged! The biggest fight was between manufacturer and wholesaler. That would of course result in some sort of political tiff at Washington. A bill would be introduced to make the manufacturer respect the wholesaler. "And if it ever comes to pass," thought Coleen, "it will be the beginning of our business Millennium."

He went for a walk. Beautiful indeed were many of the small gardens. He noticed the glorious flowers that blossomed in many parts of the city where there was a sign of life and uplift. Later he got into a section of the town that made his very heart ache. Here, no doubt, were men, women and children, doomed to servitude, poor living conditions, certainly nothing promising and surely nothing healthy. It was the old story of poverty, want, sin, everlasting degradation without the hope of escape. There was not enough work for all. He had seen something similiar down South in America where negroes lined up at the wharves or at the oyster beds, getting perhaps a few hours' work, when they were dismissed and others were given labor; but this was the bosses' idea of securing efficiency among the negroes, who would get lazy on regular days' labor.

It was strange, too, in this sooty, sodden, ugly part of the town that his idle thoughts traveled back to a

town in Ohio. It is worth repeating in the writer's own language, since it is true and was the picture presented to Coleen.

In one of the ugliest towns in Ohio were many families living in the ugly wild of its unkept condition. There were several railroads through the place, veining the section with its miles and miles of ties. The houses were ugly. The place was run down and wholly unkept. The only decent walking place was on the railroad itself. There one escaped mud or the ash sidewalks. One day a terrible wreck occurred on the railroad right in the center of the town. So great was the disaster that no attempt was made to save much of the wreckage. In that wreck was a large consignment of flower seeds. Of course no person saved them and the wild winds that blew through that section of the country in early spring scattered the seeds broadcast. The result was a flowery kingdom. Flowers grew by the railroad track, on hillsides, in gardens, everywhere where no flower had ever graced the soil. Hearts gladdened at the sight. The unusual beauty of the innocent flowers, surely a gift of God, if you want to accept it that way, brought something lovely into their lives. There was an attempt to save the flowers. It created a new desire to beautify their surroundings. Only flowers, just the ordinary garden kind; but a God-given factor strewn by a railroad wreck, another evidence of that Biblical statement that God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. And the old town blossomed and still blossoms with the germs of little flower seeds.

Coleen recalled this story. It wasn't a posy of speech. It was a reality. And he almost wished for a wreck of something in low Lodz where there were so many distressing signs of ruin and decay.

More and more could he realize just why Father

Jarenski had given his life to the priesthood. Wise even in his youth, he had drawn a fine conclusion, that oppression on every hand meant ignorance and poverty. He followed up his weaklings. He went with them to America. They had distorted ideas of America and its ways. What he had accomplished, he was never to know; but he had the assurance of doing much good where, probably, an alien leader would have been less successful. Certainly it was not for earthly gain. He had gained nothing. He had gone along with the great human tide. His ending days might have been cruelly severe; for he made noble sacrifices; but, thanks to Coleen, he would protect the grand old man in his last years, but wisely and in a manner that would insure personal benefit for the priest and his sister. He had arranged that part of his affairs with a banking house. It did not mean riches one day and poverty the next; but an evenness that could not be overstepped and certainly not squandered; for he knew as well as anything that the priest would give his last cent to the needy if he thought it necessary to give it. And Coleen having sensed the childhood in the old man, was wise enough not to leave a loophole for this generous impulse on the part of one who never thought of self.

"Time to look after yourself," explained Coleen after giving him certain papers. "If Theresa outlives you, it is arranged for her future; if you are left alone, you can keep a servant."

Chaos of thought and action occurred everywhere, and it pursued Coleen wherever he went. Why couldn't rational action be followed each day? With him it never had. His very actions took up battle with each other. One day his mind was strong and philosophical; the next day his vagrant thoughts abused the meditation of the day before. His mind worked systematic-

ally at times, and at such times he tried to transact his business, never relying on the weakness that he sometimes felt. He did not know that all men and all women have these same mental conditions. He felt it to be a sort of personal weakness; but all men and all women do have these lapses, and when they again corral their mental faculties, they hope to keep them together. Too many are like the letters that are dictated, but not read.

CHAPTER XXIX

A WEDDING IN THE WOODS

LODZ, after all, offered its amusements and also was it the scene of unusual pleasantries, especially so when there was a wedding to celebrate, which happened shortly after Coleen's complete recovery and to which he was invited by Katrina and her husband.

"You must go," urged Father Jarenski. "It will be a most unusual sight for you and while it will not be stylish nevertheless it will be something you will enjoy. The bride and groom are prominent here and I dare say this will be one of the old-fashioned affairs. You know they dance the whole night through. Dancing continues until they all are exhausted and no more merry making gives pleasure. 'Tis an old custom, quite old, and I have known these celebrations to last three and four days."

"Where is this to be?" Coleen asked. "You know I can't understand them."

"It will be in the woods. You don't have to understand them. Katrina will see that you have a pleasant evening and I dare say her husband will return with you at midnight. I shall tell her you must be here by that time; for you will have had enough of it by that time."

In the evening Katrina came with her husband. She was dressed in a frock of purple with bands of white as a trimming. Over her head was draped a thin mauve veil, perhaps yards and yards of it, filmy like a cloud where the loose ends fluttered at the back of her head. Had the dress been the same material the picture of this Polish matron would have been complete. However, her dress was severe-

ly stiff, almost as smooth as the china bowl she had used to hold Coleen's soup. Its bodice was full, severe in outline, the skirt ample, revealing beneath it a garish green petticoat, also an inner ruffle of red! It was a clash of color, yet exactly what suited the fair one. Her arms were partially covered, full of bracelets, cheap jewelry, and her fingers glistened with coral snakes, the green eyes hissing at you—or, at least, so they appeared.

Coleen felt that he was looking at an old masterpiece as he descended into the deep of the woods with his two escorts. The path wandered through old trees, certainly centuries old and by stunted bracken, some of it peculiarly rich in shades of green and purple. No doubt these very trees had echoed the sound of war's reverberation in years gone by, for their immense size certainly bespoke it. They came to a loitering stream over which they passed on a small bridge made of something like barrel staves, loosely joined with wire, each separated by the width of a stave, and all left to swing idly like a hammock! Coleen was glad the stream was narrow; yet everyone crossed the bridge with unconcern; for was it not the kind they used at all times. "And why?" Open as they were, like ladders with wide rungs, they resisted flood waters and often remained in place where heavier structures were swept along with the tide they resisted. There were glimpses of flowers, gay terraces, lighted and presentable, not unlike some pleasure grounds in America. The dancing hall was ancient. It might be mistaken for some immense herding shelter, for it was extremely rude. The pillars were ivy clad, many of them luxuriant in foliage that Nature taught to grow there. The squatty roof was broken in places, sadly in need of repair. Lichen clung to every board. The bare floor was patted to a smoothness one finds in marble. Lights flickered in rude torches, made of candles and, possibly it was some sort of green bark

they used for holders. Several youths replenished the lights as they melted down.

There were hundreds of guests, all dressed very much as was Katrina. Coleen noted the sturdy, fine-looking men there were. He was honest in thinking the men were far handsomer than the women. It wasn't wholly the gaudy dress that gave him the idea, for he rather admired the native costume; but there was something commanding in the better type of Polander that Coleen often missed on his own streets in America. It was the figure of a soldier, a fighter, a ruler. But, back of it was something missing, and he believed it was—opportunity.

Then came the bride and groom, another handsome man, full of joy, smiles and a desire to please everyone, a striking figure of youth and manhood. His bride was small, swarthy, most unlovely with a frog mouth, colorless eyes and a fullness of figure that made her appear like a puff of down. Her immense veil was extreme in width. The veil was wonderful in texture. Everything indicated the best obtainable; but Coleen happened to look at the bride's feet. Impossible! No man of refined taste could look at those ugly feet and be pleased with the bride. Feet are an index to the female character, and Coleen knew it.

In his heart he wondered just what that fine-looking Polander saw attractive in the bride. Then he recalled the great number of men he knew in America who have the homeliest wives he could imagine. "It's the charm, the money, or the something," he told himself, being placed in a position where he could not ask a reason, and would not if he could.

The weird music began. It wasn't music and yet it was harmony. Dancers took their places, mostly the very young, and bodies swayed, dipped, sprung apart, then together, meeting, separating, moving, yet not danc-

ing. It was not without rythm, but it certainly contained nothing of the dancing spirit. He watched the dancers as they shuffled from place to place, wondering what earthly enjoyment it meant to keep up this peculiar muscular motion which lacked so much grace. While thinking this, the music changed. It was not unlike a waltz, but as uncanny as a yodel. In the midst of the merrymakers he spied his charming nurse. His eyes lighted with pleasure as the winsome creature pirouetted into view. She had caught up a garland of flowers, tossed them high, now low, like a child with a skipping rope. Other women were doing likewise, but none like Katrina. Men were chasing the bride to steal a kiss, and unable to get it, they kissed their companion. Katrina slapped a youth, tossed back her glorious head, struck out prettily with her shapely foot and fell into the arms of her rescuer, her husband, who planted his kiss on legitimate property. Like a song bird let loose, she flung herself into the fun of all merrymakers, and sighting Coleen, she floated up to him, put out both arms like a fairy from some moonbeam valley and cajoled him to dance with her. He shook his head. At home he had been a good dancer, and he was not certain that he was wanted as a dancer. But Katrina's husband pushed him forward. There was no resisting either. He found himself dancing with the sprite of a child and her every motion was poetry and music. A young man, comely and mischievous, reached over from the embracing arms of his own fair charmer, to steal a kiss from Katrina. She was offering those sacred lips to him when Coleen pulled her to him, almost roughly, holding the mischievous little head against his own breast as if to ward off insult, injury and wrong. "Don't let him!" he said, almost fiercely. She did not understand him; but she understood his look. Like a butterfly crushed in its first happy flight, she felt his meaning.

Quietly she walked away with him to where her mother was nursing the hungry little Josef. With cheeks aflame at the meaning of her partner, she grabbed up her baby, flung open the front of her dress, offering the necessary nourishment to the howling infant. Coleen had hurt her. Instinctively he felt this. She liked him and she did not like the way he had acted. She slipped away from him and danced with her husband. But the pleasure was gone. Her wildcap joy was no more. When her husband returned to Lodz to accompany Coleen back to the home of the priest, his wife followed, carrying the heavy child, and not smiling.

The next day Coleen saw her in her own yard. She was lying flat on her stomach, the baby before her, sitting in the grass. She was tickling the little feet with a flower stem, and Josef was screaming with delight. When she saw Coleen, she turned her back on him, thought better, got up, and walked into her house without speaking.

"Well, I admire your spirit, good nurse, but had I known you wanted the kiss that much, I might have furnished it myself."

When next he saw her, she was smiling radiantly. She was too much the sunbeam not to be happy. Maybe it was because she was walking with a perfect priest, Father Gazzi, ample and genial, with an embracing laugh and an enveloping voice. He had married her and he knew every sin of her life and could have written them ten times over on his little finger nail.

The next day Coleen was invited to a home of great wealth and aristocracy. The invitation was extended to him through Father Jarenski, who was to be the guest of honor. They walked to the house which was not far distant. It was a wonderful structure of light tan that looked as if it might be fashioned of clay or yellow soap. The material was not stone, neither was it cement, but

something earthy and probably baked. The surface was smooth and clear. The main entrance was of immense height, finished not unlike a cathedral door and seemed to take up much of the front of the house. There was a circular room at the right of the entrance, extending upward to a point near the top of the house, where it suddenly coiled and twisted itself into something like the flame of a big torch that is twisted in the wind. Four of these immense torches adorned the top of peculiarly shaped projections, rooms of course that squatted around the main entrance.

Within was vastness, darkness, considerable tapestry, a wonderful blending of rich colors and many fine pictures, some sacred, others of a weird and peculiar significance, such as snakes or gnomes struggling with devils, half man, half animal. Their host was a business man with a bad case of rheumatism and a Jewish nose for which it is likely he could not account. His wife was a most gracious woman, who welcomed her guests as pleasantly as one might desire, then faded into the background of velvets, tapestries and old brasses, not to appear until dinner was announced.

Coleen sensed the superiority of this home. Here, no doubt, was wealth, education, refinement and a home wherein one might enjoy home life in all its strange reality.

Before dinner was announced, Father Jarenski asked Coleen if he would like to see how noodles were made. It struck Coleen as being deliciously funny, inasmuch as he heartily hated anything that went into soup. "It will interest you," he said; "for it is quite a clever trick."

Of course he went into the great kitchen where a youthful maid showed him what she had between two bowls. It was a mixture of flour, lard and water, raised by the heat of the two bowls. She turned it out on a large

table covered with something like unbleached sheeting and began pulling the mass into shape. It was tough, clear, almost the color of cloudy blown glass. She cut it into threads, so fine that the watcher wondered how her sharp knife played so fast and so accurately over the thin sheet of dough. This she turned into a huge caldron of boiling water, salted, then covered it. Lastly she lifted them with a wire ladle, threw them into ice water, drained the noodles and put them into an immense bowl, as large as an American wash bowl. The bowl was quite hot and over the clear noodles she poured her rich soup.

"It was truly wonderful. I would not have missed it for anything."

"That is why you hear in America, 'See Poland make her noodles!' "

As he left the house his host slipped into Coleen's hand a small jewelry box. He was about to open it when the man smilingly intimated he must not open it then. For a few seconds he talked with the priest, who said: "You must not open the box until you get home. It is to insure your safety back to America."

It touched him wonderfully, coming from this strange host, and all the way back home he was wondering just what it contained. He opened the box before the priest. On a layer of pink satin lay a small gold cross to which was attached a small chain as thin as is worn by a young debutante.

This gift was valuable. Coleen knew that it was given to him because of the peculiar friendship existing between himself and the priest. "I wonder if it is blessed?" Coleen asked whimsically.

"If it isn't," said Father Jarenski, taking the gold emblem into his old hands, "it will be; and I wish to leave on it a kiss to go with you into eternity."

He raised the cross to his lips, kissed it silently and replaced it in the small box.

"Our host is satisfied with life," said Coleen, wishing to break in on the solemnity of the moment.

"Yes, he is not deprived of work, education or opportunity. Here, as elsewhere, we are driving our best citizens to the universities of Germany, the peace of England and the mercantile and educational possibilities of America. Our backwardness here is our stumbling block. Was it what you expected when you started here?"

"I was expecting nothing. I came not for curiosity or gain. I felt drawn here, without any purpose in life. It has not been a disappointment in any respect. I shall remember it as one of the most remarkable events in my life. I shall return home next week. I see I am needed there, but, oh, you don't know how I shall hate to leave you and how unwelcome I shall feel, returning to a place where I'm not really needed, where everyone could do without me. I must get back and work, work, work. Was it a weak spirit to give up as I did? I don't want to be weak, purposeless nor even a good figure-head. But I did give in."

"You did nothing of the kind, John. Any man who knows you will know you as a tower of strength and purpose. I have found so much in you to admire, that I can't say any particular weakness has assailed you. There was a time when I felt that a fancy might lead you astray. I saw you fight it down and conquer that weakness. Other men, good and true, have made more grievous mistakes where women are concerned; for when you bring certain people together and try to detach their affection, you are tearing souls asunder."

"Do you think it possible for a man to care tenderly for two women at the same time?" Coleen asked cautiously.

"Unquestionably I do! I know of a case where one of our poorest men became quite wealthy. His wife was a peasant and a splendid woman. She was the mother of his children and there was not a thing in the world he did not do for her. As he grew in strength, power and wealth it took him into a totally different social atmosphere. It brought him in contact with women of a different type than his wife. He tried for years to have her cultivate the same social attitude. When she failed, he still loved her. He has often mentioned her to me as his little white pigeon, and I know he loved a woman in the social world. I fought with that man's pride, gained nothing and finally gave him up as a queer subject. He was not true to his wife nor his family. They never knew of his perfidy. No tragedy occurred, no slander, and they all escaped trouble, though that does not often occur. He lost a jewel—his soul—in the transaction; but he told me he was willing to give ten times as many to love the two women in the next world!"

"You know what a scoundrel like that is in America?" Coleen asked. "It is about the weakest man we have. He is selfish. Not being able to give, he takes. I was in his position too; but I certainly knew which woman I loved best and would defend against the whole wide world! I once heard a doctor say that a certain man in Garthage was hypnotized. His listener who knew the case of the other woman told the truth when he said that the culprit was not hypnotized, but was unquestionably demoralized!"

"Putting it that way," laughed the aged man, "I believe there is a whole lot of demoralized matter in America, parading around in spadetail coats and sacred linen. When the time comes to think of their souls instead of their wants, some of them will hang up the high silk hat,

fold away the good black suit and will get into a different frame of mind."

"Well, that's a mournful way to explain it to a red-blooded man, Father Jarenski, for it takes a fellow from Lover's shrine to the city morgue, and I don't think he even has a pass into Kingdom Come. It strikes me as being most detestable, that all the good things in this world are indigestible or immoral."

"You are getting well, John. I see the signs. But remember this that the only love worth pursuing is that which draws you close to God. I have told you that before."

"I believe it too. It surely takes courage to just live!"

The priest was nodding. He often slept during the day. He lurched forward, jerked himself back, smiled and got up to his feet. "A fine host I make, going to sleep in the midst of a most entertaining subject—to you at least. If ever I had loved it would have been one woman, just one woman, from her fine young body to her bowed old frame. She would have been everything on earth to me and my hope of heaven. It is my solution, and I wonder that other men don't see it the same way."

"Maybe some of us do. I know I shall never marry again!"

"What's that?" asked the priest. "A young man like you? John, with all respect to your beloved wife, don't live alone. That isn't the life for you. If you have had your youthful love dream once; don't think it can't come again. You will marry some day."

CHAPTER XXX

THE NEW ERA

THE world is held back by men who do not care to see it progress. Philosophers, scientists, men with one goal-cooperation, agree to this statement. The profit of concentration and efficiency does not interest some men.

In Ohio there is a little city known as Zoar. It is a great pity that this quaint settlement was ever invaded by outsiders; and as sad to know the gentle Zoarites put aside their small commercial kingdom to be one of us. Not much of Zoar remains but its memory.

A small settlement with its whole government planned and executed! They made their own necessities. They managed their own affairs and benefitted by the profits that accrued from their labors. They quit it at a time when, in the heart of every true American, came that feeling of democracy which they had seen used wisely in Zoar, and want, even now, among the thinking, working race.

Why not?

Why don't we know enough to organize and sell our own products? If Zoar could have its butchers, bakers, creameries, and every necessary industry, why on earth do we trust others to do this for us, take our products, tie them up in store-houses, while the oil, steel, bread and coal magnates sell back to us at their own prices? Surely every man should have a share in the capitalization of America. Zoar had its small government, without evading the ethical laws of the great Government, and they were happy, contented, satisfied until—what caused it? They were getting the profit themselves.

I dare say they are not getting it now. Until you can trust yourself, believe in yourself, work for yourself, or organize with others for yourself, I realize you will ever stand where someone will do it for you and you will learn the hurt early in the game.

Coleen was thinking this while opening his mail. Then he put it aside, the budget of letters, and looked at his sleeping companion, sitting near him before the priest's humble home. The afterglow purpled the western sky. It was a lazy, delightful evening. Brutus, awake, snapping at flies, lay between the two chairs occupied by the men. Dusty flowers bowed their heads with odors sweet and the need of rain. Autumn flowers are gorgeous in color riot, and those in Theresa's garden, planted carelessly, grew in a glorious show of color.

Back in Garthage there was no such quiet. Even Lodz was working mad at times. It sent its clouds of industrial smoke to the very heavens, and soot descended with impish delight, blackening everything it touched. Not so near the priest's old home. A drowsy stillness was most painful. Coleen was mildly excited. His mail urged his home going. For weeks he had considered it lightly. Now he wanted to go, and at the earliest possible moment.

He was needed to forge ahead with the business. He meant to open a constructive era. He had been clearing ground all these years. He knew the pleasure of result. That, however, was a mild beginning. Few enlightened men care to leave their work unfinished. He used to say that some grain was sure to be burned with the chaff. Coleen was not a man to ever permit others to do his thinking for him. They could work for him; but his mind refused alien interference and was usually unhampered.

Further development of his mail-order crusade must be

promoted. Another venture, though he was unprepared for it and unwilling to accept any offer at the time, was the desire of friends to place him politically on the big tread-mill of the State. "Governor of Ohio—maybe—not now. No, not now," he repeated.

"In time," he meditated. "I want it, of course I want it; then, possibly, my light will burn the brighter."

He had in mind a political venture. The working plan was not original in the business world and not unknown in the political field but, as yet not adopted. Only a crusade and a willingness to spend his own money on the project would ever determine whether it was a feasible plan or a mere theory, frivolous and impracticable.

But he meant to try it even if it failed. He could smell brimstone as soon as he put it up to Garthage. He doubted if even Holmes would agree with him.

He patted Brutus on the head.

"Brutus, old beauty, I'm going to take you home."

"What's that?" Father Jarenski was not always asleep when his eyes were closed. "Going home? What is that I hear you imparting to Brutus, while I am so near?"

"Why did you not stay awake? I had no one to talk with but the dog. You heard what I said. I'm going home. My mail urges me to go at once. I'll be sorry, Father Jarenski, to leave you—only God knows how I shall miss you. I've been here too long with my troubles and my sorrows. What a blessing it has been to have a loyal friend during these dark months."

"I am glad you feel that way, John; but for you my bounty would be poor indeed. I owe so much to you. If you must go, and of course you must, I shall not object; but—" sadly, "when you do go, I shall have the assurance that whatever you go to do, it will be for humanity.

It is as much, at times, to save the human body as the soul divine. Your work is noble, John. Then you—"

Father Jarenski got up, walked into the house, and Coleen knew that their conversation was interrupted by a sense of loneliness which the old man felt with the unexpected news that the pleasant summer was swiftly drawing to a close. The priest loved friends. Old age is lonely. It has so little companionship. The aged live in the past. Friendship so often is withheld. To some men old age has more vexations than all of life put together. Father Jarenski was lonely for intellectual companionship which a man of his mental attainment craved. Coleen had supplied humor, delightful to the priest who told a good story without ever twice repeating it. There were sober moments; but generally there was a clash of jolly wit; the priest being the winner.

"Come walk with me, Father Jarenski, we must talk. I shall leave Monday. Indeed I shall. I have made up my mind to that. Only two days, I know. Yes, yes, I understand; but I must go. I dare say I shall return some fine day. Now, please do not talk that way. First we must visit my adorable nurse. She probably will kiss me good-bye," jokingly. "Never have I seen a race so careless of hygiene as right here. You kiss—why here she comes this very minute. I do wish I could make her understand me. I can't. Tell her we will stop on our way back. I do not care to go there now."

The message was delivered and interpreted. "She says she wants time to get into the house to put away the toys; but I must not tell you. Now isn't that exactly like a woman?"

"Some women. Most women," confessed Coleen. "Better that pride than no pride at all. Say we go down this street and make for that place over there. How beautiful it is. If my nurse could come along this would

be a place for the enchantment of life. I'd permit you to marry me to her by all the sacred rites of your church, and that takes half a day, doesn't it? Time enough for a a man to change his mind or get over his divine rage."

The priest laughed. "Don't be silly. Nothing about the time it takes. It is the result. It establishes marriage and gives permanence to human society."

"Permanence? I say you are correct. Eternal servitude. Why of course I am not in love with the child. She is adorable. There is a wandering spark in her dainty makeup that is kindling all hearts; but not painfully. It is her childlike nature. You know if she were in America, she would be spoiled. She is so remarkably unconscious of her beauty."

"I thought that the celestial rapture came only from the lips of school boys, youths of a tender age. I have known coarse rustics to be godlike in their sincere wooing and not half-artful at that. Once in a farmer boy's life is he conscious of faces in the clouds, peeping flowers in the cornfield and birds that sing to be noticed. But, John," abruptly, "I hope the siren calls you again. In time I want you to marry."

Coleen turned on him a face of blank amazement. "Marry?" he repeated. "My good man, it is the least of my intentions. I have been talking like a schoolboy, merely to talk. The thought was like a blade of waving grass. I'm talking one thing; thinking another. One woman's existence made my world rich. I shall never marry. Even if I should ever get it in my head to marry, I have not the remotest idea in this world the type of woman I should choose. I do not care anything now for the color of eyes, hair, height or accomplishment. I shall always be pleased to have the friendship of women and, if I do not say it I am not much in need of the intellectual. I guess she would have to be a sort of cuddledy-

up girl. Father Jarenski, did you ever read Dickens' books?"

"A few; not all."

"Well, I have read them all. I ought to be able to remember the book which contains my ideal girl. I loved her when I was a boy. I loved her all my life. She was her husband's choice and a provoking choice, lovable even unto death. Oh, what book was it in anyway? At any rate, I remember he was so madly in love with her, an earthly grub worshipping the gentle moon, and he took her on his lap to gently rebuke her. What did she do? She took his pencil from his pocket, drew it from his hair down over his brow to his nose, then the length of his nose, over his mouth and chin, then gurgled down his collar. You know that is a little girl's act, detracting his attention, playing with the man to keep him in a good humor. Later that girl-wife died when her baby was born, and that is the only time in my life that I ever read anything that I felt like sneaking away to cry. David Copperfield? Little Dorritt? Oh, pshaw, I forget books. But she was my heart's love, even then."

"Then you must be a blind man, John. I know her too. She is alive, a sweet, beautiful, flower of the womanly kingdom; but you never saw her. I could laugh at you. How dense, my son. How remarkably dense. I, too admired Dora, the child-wife of David Copperfield. It was not Dorrit," he added with a pleasing smile.

"Now tell me who it is. I confess ignorance. I mean this other girl."

"Ruth Benson!"

"Ruth Benson! My private secretary? Why—yes, Father Jarenski, Ruth is a fine young woman, not unlike the girl I have just described; but I don't think in all the years she has been with me that I have ever given her one real searching look. You know I never pay any atten-

tion to the women in my employ. She certainly is not the tailored girl we meet so often. She is a flower sort, as you say; wears nice dresses and jewelry in the office; but does it as no other girl can or ever will. She is too much a child at heart to deny herself the luxuries. But really, I never have felt any affection for her. But, then, why should I? I was a married man and she knew it. Our days together have been as gray as a March sky. She may have lovers innumerable. Unquestionably she is a splendid young woman."

"What I admired was her fidelity to your work. She accomplished wonders in that direction. Not many young women grasp the vital point of a business idea with her alertness. She can handle all the ropes for you. She is doing it. Then she goes out of the office, leaving her cares there, and outside she is all that a young woman should be, girlishly true and frank, full of vivacity, and I don't suppose any woman in Garthage is the possessor of more womanly virtues. Not too religious to be lively; not too practical to be interesting, just a sort of little Peter Pan girl who will never grow up. Marry her, John!"

"John will not marry her! I know she is all you say. But, listen, I am much older than Ruth, ages older. She would not have me as a precious gift. No, I thank you; you are good. Anything more to say?"

"Only this, John. I was thinking of her position in this world. She is alone, John, sadly alone. I know of no living relative. I knew her father, Dr. Max Benson, a grander man never lived. Of course you remember him. I had forgotten that. Then there was her mother. John, I never looked at Ruth that I did not see something of the mother in her. Her mother was an artist. I used to visit at their home; for I had a sense of the perfect splendor of appropriateness the minute I went into the house. Once she invited me in to see a vase she had re-

ceived as a prize from a school of art, an expensive affair, almost two feet high. She directed my attention to it at the rear of the room in a maze of dark drapery. I asked manlike why she did not bring it out to show it off, which she explained was not the thing to do; for it would outshine everything else, and it was a color scheme where it was placed. It was that way with everything. She sacrificed nothing real for the artificial; but when she employed the artificial, she worked miracles. You see that in Ruth. She dresses unlike most young ladies in the office. Did you ever see her when, honestly, you could say she was not properly dressed? It was something individual, I care not what she wore. She never wore even a ring, necklace or bangle that was unbecoming. It was not for conquest or show. It was Ruth."

"Yes, Ruth," Coleen repeated spiritedly. "I guess I was blind. She must think I am a grim one, could she read my thoughts. I know her hair is a pretty shade of auburn, and I know it worries her to death when the heavy braids come down. Are her eyes gray, brown, blue or black?"

"You had better find out when you go back. Now let us talk of something beside women."

"I was prepared to do that at the start; but here you have talked cuttingly to me and—"

"I never advise a man to do anything wrong. You are pompously proud of your own opinions, John; and some of them don't amount to anything. You are tactful and sturdy and I believe if you told a lie you would be jocose. You must remember that I want to give you something that will be of everlasting good, dear boy; and when an old man advises a younger one to wed the daughter of a noble man and a glorious woman, I am offering you all my heart contains."

"I know you are." Coleen looked wistfully ahead.

After all, it did seem that he, like many other men, looked to distant fields which seem the smoothest, fairest and greenest, while unmindful of the green sward and flowers growing at their very door.

"She must have soul, John. Ruth has—soul. Her soul can be trusted to the end of time. All that is lovely and pure in her as a young woman will be supplanted only by what is nobler, more matronly and maternal. Her type is the mother of men."

The two men crossed a bridge which curved gracefully over a narrow stream. Ducks were paddling in the water, splashing with keen enjoyment. They stretched their necks, peered with bright eyes at the men, ducked and went on.

"Father Jarenski, that fellow in the rear reminds me of an advertisement in a mail-order book. It was printed in a hurry, I know, with total disregard for punctuation. It read something like this: 'Child's toy duck, yellow plush body, white head, yellow bill, runs on wheels, flaps its wings and quacks thirteen inches long'."

The priest laughed heartily. "Express prepaid, fifteen cents," he added.

"Wrong. I told you it was plush. Eighty-nine cents, eighty-four cents more than it was worth, I dare say! We must go back. I've spoiled our talk for this day. I hope my nurse has her house in order. We must go there. I'll not have another opportunity. Then I want you to go with me over to that Jew's curiosity shop. I saw a topaz brooch there that I'll buy for Ruth. I knew a girl with auburn hair who always wore topaz."

"I don't like topaz. Theresa has an old amber spoonholder. It looks exactly like a real topaz. If you get Ruth anything in the jewelry line, select a pure emerald. Green will be to her what a diamond is to a

blonde or brunette. I know a store where we can find an exceptionally fine selection of genuine emeralds. Say we go there first. It is on our way home."

CHAPTER XXXI

FOR HOME AND AMERICA

A QUAINT group of men, women and children stood before the priest's home that fair Monday morning, watching the departure of a foreigner who had been the priest's house guest for many months. Each had known Coleen's kindness and shared largely of his bounty. The laws of friendship are as a web interwoven into our lives, durable or fragile. Some friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions. Better have no friends than those who make swift and petty nothings of what we give in return. Better a thousand times a book, an apple and a cake in solitude by one's own cheerful fire, than idle moments spent with a harping gossip who robs us of time, patience and good spirit. There is sweet sincerity in the joy of a friend, man or woman, who—listens—understands us. Now how many friends have you? Mine have been like frostwork on a pane of glass. They vanished with the coming of a new day.

Coleen would have one lasting friend. Old Father Jarenski was fingering a gold cross that hung on his rosary. Silent lips breathed a prayer for the man who never looked back. Brutus, with almost human intelligence, looked back, then up at the sad face of his master, knowing—as only a dog can know—the mystery of friendship. Friendship is sometimes a child's luxury, it takes courage for an adult to admit it. But do not blame others. Look for your own imperfections. I sometimes wonder how much real friendship I gambled away. Now it takes courage for me to believe in it, especially when I ship-wrecked some myself! How deeply I regret my part

when friendship looks at me with her sad, mournful, accusing eyes.

Coleen settled back in the quaint old rig. What a medieval affair this hack proved to be. It was accurate in hitting every rough place in the road. Once it stopped, being a public conveyance, on its tiresome round to the station, and a large woman came in with her basket of ducks, a large basket too, and a heavy baby on her arm. A lazy husband followed, empty-handed, save for an exquisite pipe of white filigree, set in what looked like a bowl of real gold. Nowhere on earth, probably, could one see a greater variety of pipes than Coleen had seen in Russia-Poland. All men, old and young, had something choice in their own selection. Flowers prettily cupped, formed many. Grotesque figures, pieces of artistry, certainly hand-made and expensive, were seen carried by men who were poorly dressed. No man, seemingly, was a burden-bearer. Many wives were pathetically young. All seemed to have a child. All women carried the market basket. Slaves of men, their masters, dumb as animals, most of them, uncomplaining, no doubt, but plainly showing the ravages against youth and youthful freedom. Women were old at thirty; ancient at forty. Coleen pitied them. They returned his look with eyes as steady and as lacking of joyousness as those of an ox in his wooden yoke.

Once in a while a spirited dame flashed into view. Every section of the country produced a new and picturesque type. He found people interesting and enjoying his quiet survey throughout his few days' travel to his steamer, he was seeing more and learning more of man's humanity to man than he could have learned by reading from books the remaining days of his whole life. There were many occasions to laugh; as many when it was pathetic to see men and women trying to be

content with life. How could they adapt themselves to the nothingness? All they had were health, bread and climate. Maybe that was their due. No doubt there were Romeos and Juliets among them.

Coleen closed his eyes. He was travel-weary. Thoughts carried him happily back to America. He went to his office. Swearengen, of course, was married; but he still looked natural and willing to work, for all his married exuberance of spirit. Zilki was rejoicing over the young son—or was it a daughter?—never mind it was something. He met Ruth. What made him think of her? She was wearing a dress of green and tan lawn. Can a woman wear lawn in October? Of course not. It was serge. She came into the office and he hastened to meet her. Why did he do that? Certainly she paid no attention to him. Was she worth giving a perfectly honorable emerald? Maybe not. A fat woman with a weeping infant disturbed this restless day-dream. Again he closed his eyes. Ruth did smile. She looked like—he did not know what, only he rushed up to her, took her hands, looked into her eyes—brown they were, probably—and—he never knew how it happened, for she stood on tiptoe, put her arms around his neck and rested her child's lips on his that were so unworthy of that virginal kiss. But he stole it as a bold bee steals sacred honey from the heart of a flower. But he would not marry the best woman on earth, if he could!

His heart went lonesomely back to his wife. How he missed Julia! How lonely he was. If only there was just one person to welcome him home. Pass he must the old homestead. He would see it from the car window when he whirled into Garthage on the afternoon train. The great windows, like mournful eyes, would look reproachfully at him. How he had loved that home, a home but for a few years. His married life had been

a tragedy, nothing else; yet he would not have missed it for all its pain; but he wished he alone had been the one to die. Julia loved life. Thoughts went back, back. He saw his little boy on that day of his birth when the world seemed like an enchanted place. He had gone into that room, stumbling in the shadow, to see—the boy! His boy! His child! A child of love! He remembered how the nurse slipped quietly out of the room. He knelt down by the bed. His arm went over the dainty body of the boy's mother. His other arm slipped over her head, resting on the pillow. He encircled mother and babe, and neither prayed nor wept. It was a man's hour of sacred joy, which he does not share even with the Almighty—not at the time; but ever after.

He opened his eyes.

The scene changed.

Night came on. He had forgotten his dream of Long Ago. Too, he forgot Ruth and the cheap bauble he was taking home to her. He was ready to begin life. Campaign after campaign he planned. Zoar was all right on the small scale but America must be for unity. There was the strength. All business desires rushed over him. The trip was growing tiresome. That is the feeling that comes to all of us when homeward bound. We would annihilate space if we could. Being unable to do that, we hasten the train with imaginative speed, and plow the ocean's deep with fearless haste.

Of course he would meet Americans on shipboard. He was seeing familiar figures, the English, Scotch, Irish, tired American tourists and business men. All were alert, even when tired.

There is something peculiarly hypnotic when one stands with the crowd, ready to sail that mysterious deep. It is a commanding force, full of fear, yet compelling with

its fascinating call. There is a call, a voice. Venturesome souls cross many times; but all confess to the uncanny sensation of knowing that, at last, one's frail being is at the mercy of the waves and the resistance of a piece of machinery, an atom against one of the greatest destroying elements we have. One must trust. And one does trust. Is it any wonder, then, that the sight of America, and the goddess of Liberty, calls forth the wildest joy and acclamation? Hysteria, you say? Maybe you are right. But the tension is over and you will never be able to appreciate America until you are held back from it by watery distance that makes sport of your noble craft that it plays with as roguishly as a hungry lioness plays with a mouse. The waves churn into white cottony smoothness. Then they get angry at play, pile upon each other in rough play, toss, tear and rend. They are unruly, unconquerable at times. Your craft rises high, sinks low, bellows furiously and plows through the torrent of rising waves and the fight is on. How long it lasts! It is a conquest of hours and elements. No persons other than deckhands dare come on deck. Then, finally, as if disgusted with the sport of playing with some tiny plaything, the Monster ceases her torment. The wind no longer shrieks. There comes a sudden calmness. Waves, tired of their frolic, recede and the stars come out. Men declare they were unafraid. Women admit their terror. But the trouble is over and America is near. Frightened children never scampered more quickly to the protecting arms of their mothers, than Americans to the shrine of the silent Goddess who awaits them. Off come hats; the band plays the old familiar tune; strangers stand in a maze of bewilderment and admiration. Men, accustomed to her greeting, salute her gracefully, then forget her.

I often wonder if she hasn't a real heart that must

realize the pleasures and tragedies of those who come and some who go—never to return?

Coleen was thinking of this goddess while his ship struggled bravely through a storm, not a bad storm, the crew was quick to tell him. It was mild. Maybe it was mild; but he would give all he possessed if only he could sit right down on the poorest farm in Ohio and remain there indefinitely!

After the storm he fell asleep. It was the sleep of exhaustion. Several more days of travel remained. He hoped they would be fair days. He had met and talked with some delightful men and women. One man was above the average height. A tall commanding figure, presumably military. His wife was so tiny she could walk under her husband's arm, and frequently did it. The husband, quite homely of face, as solemn as an owl, businesslike to the core, smiled with pleasure at the antics of his round, little wife. She hadn't a bit of shape, absolutely none. She was an escaped sunbeam, laughing, getting up something all the time to amuse someone, and finding more pleasure in it than anyone else.

One day her husband while talking with Coleen said: "My wife told me she wishes to meet you. Come with me, she wants to ask you something, she says."

The introduction followed. She chattered merrily. He found himself laughing like a boy at her good nature. Several times he said: "Your husband, Mrs. Hadyn, tells me you wish to tell me something."

"Why I had nothing to tell you. I merely wished to see you. You see it is this way: I have a cousin, not a very brilliant woman, in Philadelphia. She told me she was going to marry an editor, and I just wanted to see what one looks like!"

Coleen accepted her joke. It was not original; but

she enjoyed it. Looking into her saucy eyes, he said, "They are all as ugly as mud! I have a notion to kiss you and throw you overboard!"

"I'll tell that to Benny when he comes up. Benny will wipe up the deck with you!"

But Benny was enjoying a good cigar, Coleen's gift.

There is no reason why one should attempt to describe Coleen's last two days on the ocean. Everyone who has ever crossed and come back, had almost the same experience. His was not the least distinctive. Every ambition now was to get back home. Once he thought he would wire to the office, thought better, and returned unannounced. Why should he tell them? At least he had no person there who would feel unduly elated at his return. Then he was tired.

He was glad to meet friends on the train. They made a jolly crowd and what Coleen had dreaded since he had left Garthage was exactly what did not happen. So often it happens to reverse its plan for us. The train sped swiftly into the town and he was not aware that they had reached the station when it was time to get off. There had been times when Coleen, having been out of a city for a few weeks or even days, returned with a feeling that, after all, he was not missed, wanted or even needed. This was a natural feeling while he was on a newspaper, without a permanent home, and often drifting from city to city.

The station was near his office; but he went to his hotel. However, there was no escape. His friends found him.

"Come on. Come on," they urged. "You are not tired! We are having a rousing old meeting down at the Community House; banquet; everything big and lively. Stay up here and you will be ultramarine blue

by morning. Come along. What if you are tired. You have to die sometime."

What else could he do? He did the best thing that suggested itself. After all, it was companionship he craved and, in all probability, he would enjoy himself.

Imagine his surprise and delight to find his good friend Gardner there. Sure Gardner was a booster. He was working right with the boys for every good cause. He had to. He wanted to get solid facts to begin something back home.

Coleen listened with others and heard a lot about bonuses, honor rolls, pensions, and while it all was as dear to his heart as a first Ingersoll watch to a boy, he stifled a yawn. His mind was working like a single candle-power jitney and he thought he would surely go to sleep.

Cansby had been speaking which, probably, was one excuse. How Coleen detested the man. "What's the use, men, what's the use, of going ahead in every business pull and working eternally for the whole bunch? If you do give the working men stock on terms that all can meet why, good heavens, what does it amount to to be a stockholder in nine-tenths of the concerns? It reminds me of the snipe-hunters holding the empty bag in the woods. We gotta lot of men here that you think you can make glad to work for each other and you think you can make the thing harmonize and merge with the work of others. Is it right? I'd like to hear."

Coleen got to his feet. He felt as if he were one hundred and thirty years old, and, probably looked it. He turned more to the audience than the speaker.

"Gentlemen. I challenge the remark of our speaker. I think we have sufficient proof in Garthage right now where our promises to the working man gave him

gold and whose performances for us are not chaff and stubble."

There was a cheer from the men.

"I'm not here to quarrel with any man's ideas—if he has one or more; but when we think of what has taken place in Garthage the past seven years, its phenomenal growth, its rise to sudden and lasting prosperity, and increasing industries, to say nothing of better working conditions and these splendid homes for the workers, I don't see why any man, especially Mr. Cansby, should reflect on the conduct of certain directors who divide their dividends if they elect to do so."

"I never said that!" yelled Cansby.

Coleen looked him square in the face. "Mr. Cansby, you may have not said it; but you meant it! Before I'd stuff my pockets with first-class mortgage bonds and go out and talk down what a working man can get by honesty, provided he wants to get anywhere in this world, I'd certainly not voice your sentiment. I say, let men get stock on easy terms. That's my idea of it. Why not the bonuses? It was not original with us; we tried it; and let me say right here that, if I don't do another day's work at anything else, I propose to work it out politically."

"Then you may have to work it out alone," Cansby answered; "for there isn't enough political money here—no one is so vitally interested to hustle for it—so you may have to sell your oil fields to accomplish it."

"Then I will do it," came the calm reply. "I am not surprised to receive that reply. But, as you see Garthage and its rapid growth, the necessity at all times for police protection, I can't understand why it would not be a good idea to adopt all of our police force with regard to efficiency. It will be given a try-out soon in other cities when its value is recognized. Fail? How can it fail?

If a man is working to accomplish anything, hasn't he far greater interest in his work if there is some recognition afterwards? There have been some excellent officers in America, men who did noble work, often at the risk of their lives; but, being subordinates, often not friendly with the head officers of the police force, they never received anything but their usual salary for the work. Quite often a good policeman has been taken off the best beat and sent to an undesirable place following the bravest deed he ever did. It breaks a fellow's heart to work like that, then to have some bully keep him down, probably discharge him, a mere-question-of-superiority!"

Charlie Holmes had slipped down into his big chair. His finger tips were pressed together, a settled look, not easily read, was what Coleen noticed.

"Mr. Holmes, what is your opinion? You seem to have struck a snag in your thinking since I began talking."

Holmes laughed.

"Why, what I was thinking was this: You must be ready to offer a late reward for the fellow who winged you when you first came to Garthage. I don't think he is in this crowd."

The men laughed.

"I like your idea; but—I'm honest, Mr. Coleen, I'll have to think it over. It isn't news to me; but—well, you'll admit that a person should have time to consider it. We always need good police protection; there is the need of reward, if that is your idea, in every deal we handle. Couldn't use that bonus plan any better than right here in our politics. I feel as if I need a pension, anyhow, for voting the Republican ticket for twenty-five years, without even getting the post-office. But, gentlemen, the chef just waved frantic-

ally to me. I can talk better after eating a good dinner; and I can sing better when I'm on water than dry land; so let us dine on Baltimore's fattest oysters and probably, we shall find—a pearl."

After eating dinner, and no chef in the valley could excel black Charlie at the art, Holmes picked up a pitcher, milk-stained, and held it aloft.

"Here's to the prodigal! Up with your glasses! He is back in Garthage to fight—another war of the Roses.

" 'We don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men,
We've got the money, too.'

"Gentlemen, Bleeding Kansas wasn't in it with poor old Garthage with a cinder in her eye when John Coleen came here. I guess he thought he had struck the Holy Alliance when he got here. But he came and while we have seven wonders of the world, I consider John one of them (rather than accept the Mausoleum at Heliparnassus which I never saw). I'm glad to welcome Mr. Coleen back to the city he made. No man here can deny his indefatigable effort to bring peace out of chaos. He fought single-handed a foe that swooped down on us in the mail-order combine and we let him do it long enough to break any ordinary man's spirit; but, because he had a cause, and one that went deep into the sacred lives of men, women and little children, he came, not as an agitator, but a minister to the business people. He has helped save this valley and his work has not been done and forgotten; but it was like throwing a rock into deep water and the waves reaching out and far beyond, touching even distant shores. Where was one of us that did it before he came? What has he personally gained by it? Absolutely nothing but the satisfaction of saving business in which he

was not engaged and which we were. I honor him for his fine, sterling, upright qualities. He is a man among men and we owe him a vote of thanks on this the eve of his return to Garthage. Up with your glasses. Zip Zip. Hurrah. Why—Mr. Cansby, did your oysters not agree with you? Sorry. Gentlemen, I thank you for listening and sparing my life at this hour—well, the hour is not late, and I doubt very much if we want to talk business, anyway. After all, it is not an appropriate time."

Coleen went over to where Cansby was wriggling into a light fall coat. "I'm sorry if I said anything to offend you. I ought not to have blazed up as I did; but you know I'm strong on this subject."

"That's all right. Why, of course it is all right. Had to say something, didn't we? Had to talk. Not what we say, anyhow. What we do. By George, I got you blocked back there, Coleen, on that oil hill you picked out."

"What oil hill?"

"The Merrill farm you bought."

"Merrill farm? I did buy that thing, didn't I?"

"You bet you did! Now what?"

"Nothing. Only I sold that thing to the Wabash Railroad!"

Holmes ducked his head, laughed and said: "Well, I'll be—darned! I'll be—darned!"

But Coleen couldn't smile. He was dead tired. Later it dawned on him that it must have been an impromptu affair after all, something for his benefit. The men were kind. In a way he felt sorry for giving Cansby the barbed-wire thrust. Socially they were as other men, mostly; while heartily disliking each other's business policy. Cansby was not an educated man. He

was all that a shrewd business man longs to be. That alone covered a multitude of sins.

Shortly after Coleen had arrived in Garthage, he believed Mr. Cansby was the leading business man and his wife the social leader as well as her husband's business-head. We all make many mistakes when meeting new acquaintances. He never quite forgot a remark he heard. He had asked if Cansby and his wife went much in society.

"Not much" said a bystander. "Every summer he and his wife take a vacation; but it was learned they both went up to Battle Creek to take the rest cure. That is about as near as they have rubbed around with bank-note Tommies."

Coleen thought of it that night. Just why, he did not know. Tired and sleepy, yet strangely happy, his wits traveled lazily without guide or direction.

CHAPTER XXXII

AGAIN ON THE FORCE

REFRESHED after many hours sound sleep, Coleen ate a late breakfast and went to his office. He felt like a stranger entering a business house where everyone was a stranger to him. How he was to pick up his work, he did not know. He had dropped his reins in a hurry when he left. But it was certainly good to be back. He met the men, most of them had seen him the night before. He sat down at his desk, looked at the different drawers, pushed pens, paper and ink around; replaced them where he found them, then waited for—Ruth. She was in another part of the building. She came, smiled and shook hands.

Coleen wanted to laugh. Never was a young woman more businesslike. Her attitude was gracious though nothing at all as he had meant it to be. She opened her desk, took several letters from it, gave them to him with the explanation that each needed immediate attention.

He read them through.

"Miss Benson," he said, "you may answer three of these as you know how they should be answered. I'll dictate the answers for these (showing her the remaining letters), to Miss Murry."

Miss Murry came into the private office. She had never been pretty, and with many business cares she had grown quite ugly. When first she came to Coleen she was uncreditably giddy and thoughtless, performed her duties not at all and cried every Saturday when discharged; but came back the next Monday morning,

by request. She now was an expert stenographer, capable, but no thinker. She proved an excellent imitator, but a poor originator. She was short and thin and scrupulously clean; but she was ugly, pitifully ugly for a girl. She lisped which was the only attraction she possessed. Going up to Mr. Coleen she spoke rapidly, "Well Mi'thah Coleen, thith ith thurley a treat. Awful glad to see you."

"Are you?" he said. "Well, Miss Murry, I'm glad to see you. I brought you a foreign gift." He handed her a small box.

Ruth looked at the couple, hearing everything that was said. She glanced from her window, up the dreary slope of the great Laurel Hill. She had worked hard all summer. She had not even enjoyed her vacation. It came at a time when the weather was insufferably hot. She turned to her machine; put in a fresh paper, and wrote.

Tony had been a caller, sweet and boyishly enthusiastic, eager to drag Coleen away to see that wonderful baby. Coleen looked at the little chap, joy unspeakable in his eyes at the sight of the boy. How handsome was the child!

"I'll be down tonight, Tony. I have something for you. Yes, and something for the baby. Of course I remembered it. Now good-bye, Tony. Go tell your mother."

After all it was easier to swing back into work than he imagined it would be.

At four o'clock he rose from his desk to go home, went to the door and returned slowly, stopping at Ruth's desk. Then he drew up a chair and sat down.

"Ruth," and her spoken name surprised each of them. "I want to know something. I've been thinking it all day. I don't want to leave the office without knowing."

"Yes, Mr. Coleen, have I done anything wrong?" She looked startled.

"Wrong? No, Ruth. How could you do anything wrong? I am like a great big old lonesome dog, Ruth. I don't know which way to turn. What I want to know is just this: are you, Ruth, glad I'm back? I want you to be glad! I—don't think it would have been worth coming if you did not want—me—here."

He laid his little trophy in her lap.

She did not answer him. He needed no answer. She was opening the box and when she saw the lovely brooch lying on its satin cushion, with all the rapture of a pleased child, she lifted it to her lips, kissed it and laughed, such a hearty, happy laugh that he patted her on the head then quickly left the office.

He knew nothing. She had made no reply. He had never meant to make that schoolboy advance. That the words of Father Jarenski were driving him on and on, he felt them just as if he had experienced a sort of hypnotic power at times, exerted by the aged priest.

The next day he returned to his work. He worked side by side with Ruth. Business was the same as ever. He looked for the brooch; but she was not wearing it. Nor did she wear it that week, though he looked each day for it. Suddenly realizing that he had indeed made a mistake, despite her cheerful manner of acceptance, he said nothing more to her.

The next Sunday he saw her in the choir. Even at a distance he saw the green shafts of light that sparkled at her neck, buried in a knot of white chiffon. Ah, she had kept it, girl-like, as a Sunday trinket. He caught her eye, smiled and she smiled back, laying her song-book against her breast, the better to hide the small jewel.

The next day he said: "You can thank Father Jarenski for the brooch. He selected emeralds. I was going to

buy topaz. I think he told me your mother was fond of emeralds. I wonder which you prefer?"

"As I never had anything so lovely as this, and certainly, not so expensive, I presume nothing else would please me so much as emeralds. I love them. But I like topaz almost as well. Did I ever thank you for it? Yes? Then I'm surprised; for I gazed on it with starved eyes. I do love pretty things."

She turned aside to answer the telephone.

"For you," she said, still holding the receiver. As he reached for the receiver, he held her hand, thought better and released it.

"Who? Who? Of all persons on this earth! Natalie! I'm surely glad, delighted is the word, to hear your voice. I—what's that?" After a lapse of several minutes, he said: "I will ask them. No, I never knew they had fox hunts on your father's estate. Several in this county. I'll see if I can round the men up and we will be there. What?" Then he laughed joyfully.

He turned back to his work. Natalie! Natalie! Then something like a dark curtain fell between John Coleen and his private secretary. There was Natalie! He would see her again. There was a passionate longing to see her. He found himself face to face with tender memories. "How did men think who had grown old and white-haired when they recalled tender passions of years gone by? Was it as a jest or merely an incident? Were they plunged into deep melancholy or did they make of it an idle hour and boast of conquest?" He believed that insignificant odds and ends of romances clung to every man's heart. Yes, he had been married at the time. He groaned like a man whose bones are being slowly crushed. With trembling hands he put his letters away. His past came back with its hideousness and he grieved for his fault, his unpardonable sin.

Would he go?

He decided not to go. He decided he would go. Ever seeing that smile, hearing that voice, believing in his own strength, cherishing something he wanted to see, hunting for red roses in gray ashes, he—did—go!

Ruth Benson with her silk-trimmed dress, her emerald brooch pinned at her throat, sat silently at her desk, sorting mail and attending to Coleen's private business. He had come into the office just long enough for her to see how well he looked in his khaki riding suit, then she saw him with several men ride down the street and leave for the Neugart farm.

The crowd was ready to go on the hunt when the party arrived from Garthage. Coleen had never met Natalie's husband. The instant he saw him, he appreciated the man's worth and something attracted the two men to each other. They chatted easily. Coleen liked the young lawyer, who was a typical son of the metropolis and at ease with his fellow man. Then Natalie drew her horse up by the side of Coleen's and they set out at a merry pace. She slowed her horse, looked back at him, saying: "Are you coming?" What an infinity of dreams he caught in her eyes. It was, indeed, the same Natalie. Possibly a little surer of herself, certainly matronly in her bearing and not at a loss to be a pleasing hostess. Coleen knew she was exquisite, without envying the owner of the wonderful woman. What he had known in the girl was intensified in the woman. But suddenly she gave a start, struck her horse lightly with her riding whip, and was away like the wind to join her company of friends, men and women. Coleen rode by her side, but switched aside to talk with some men. They were scattering in different directions over the hills. Dogs bayed, horns sounded, horses fretted to get into the real chase. A long blast was heard in the distance, a call to the chase

and the race was on. Like a captive bird, just escaped, Natalie rode by the side of her husband. She rode exceedingly well and Coleen saw them pass over the hill and out of his sight.

So far as he was concerned, he was ready to return to his office. The sport did not attract him. If he could excuse himself, he would. The fire had died down in his romance. It always had done this way. But, what pleased him more than anything was the way Natalie had carried it out. Was she trying to prove to him that the impassible barrier was there, that he would please her more by honoring her than remembering? There had been evidence of an almost girlish attempt to prove something to Coleen that he might see her in all the perfection of her honorable wifehood. She showed the love she felt for her husband throughout the day and its jollification, and during the dinner at her home that night, she was revealing over and over again things which she was afraid someone present would think she had lost.

The memory of a charming wife, a remarkable Natalie, closed one chapter in his life that October day. Never would she be just the same. It would be a pleasant memory, nothing else, nor would he have made it different if he had the desire. Not to honor a man whose wife you may admire, is about one of the surest signs of your own inferiority; for it shows the cloven hoof that invades another's domain.

The year passed. That awful holiday season came and went. Short, indeed, had been the year, but long, like an eternity in its monotony to the editor.

His campaigns took him east and north. Men were seeking his services as a speaker of business truths. He never spoke at length at any meeting, possibly one reason why his short talks, impregnated with nothing but the truth, sounded true and gave weight to every assertion.

Banquets and socials developed the social side of life. He liked men, was always glad to be with them. They were far more powerful factors in his life than women had ever been. He liked the personal contact in business that injected a human note in all that he was doing. He dug out more destroying roots in the business field, the killing mail-order growth that kept other things from growing to their complete fruition. That enemy he fought with all the fighting tenacity of a business Bonaparte. His constructive policies being simple, men were able to understand them as well as ready to adopt them, one way he had of insuring efficiency in co-operation with different men of different views, each responsible in some work that helped to construct the gigantic whole. The worth of any man is measured by testing, so it was with what Coleen always had to tell them. He was a quiet speaker, seldom giving way to vituperation. To be emphatic was his aim and he did not create a scene to do it. Some attributed his success to his own personal magnetism; others to the sincerity of his own convictions. One of his best lectures was "When I Stopped Trying To Fool Myself." In that was a sermon to men. First the boy at school with no thought of his future responsibilities, happy, satisfied with what each day brought him, enjoying the freedom and the optimism of youth; then the college boy with nothing lacking in what constitutes the development of every possibility in the young man. It was a time in life when the boy disliked to relinquish his play days for serious matters, one reason why both were easily and happily balanced. This picture of the college youth was the strong feature of Coleen's lecture, for he had missed college days, something he had ever regretted. Likely it was one reason why he paid such glowing tribute to the college boy with his limping inclinations and his half-baked ideas, though always keen and as alert as

a fox-hound on the scent. Then came the man in business. He enjoyed success, surmounted defeat, sometimes bowed down before it, got up, staggered under the blow, stunned, defeated; but ready to go ahead, always ready! As a college boy he had measured his strength with physical and mental possibilities, but mostly physical, for he wanted success mostly on the football teams, while stubbornly denouncing the academic part of his duties. Now that he was a man with a going concern in business he told how to weed out incompetence; what requirements were necessary for a situation which you hadn't happened to anticipate. There was the man whose opportunity was not ripe. As nothing stays put, the man looked ahead, always ready to step into the place where success opened the door or let down a bar; and, when this did not happen for him, he hurdled the barrier, not knowing just where he would land.

But he told this story in a way that let every man see himself from childhood to boyhood. There was so much that was human, with its humor and pathos, that those who sat spell-bound under the forceful but eloquent discourse, could not believe that the lecturer had finished his story and stood looking kindly down at the sea of faces. None knew that the reason for the story taking vital hold on every listener was because it came from the heart, and, therefore, returned to it. It was John Coleen's own life, told with every throb of his heart. It pleased the youth and interested the men who had covered a stretch of the same progress in their lives, with different variations. With a battery of brain-cells, everyone generating business power, Coleen was not the man to stand before intelligent men, telling them things they could not believe, or offering them false hopes. He did not tell them it was an easy game. His character had gone through the world with a flint in his heart instead of a rose on his

lapel. Then he looked at the sturdy business men, the grim faces, steel-visaged bankers, bosses and leaders and said, perhaps a bit sadly: "Why is it you show inappreciation? Why do you hold aloof from the men who work for you? Are you afraid of their ingenuity or are you unwilling to admit their intelligence to grasp your ideas? Each time you keep an employe down, don't you know you invite competition, provided the man has an idea which you will never know he does possess until you try him out. Not always the aged have that idea. Mere youths sometimes give us genius. It is the boy who takes his mother's kitchen clock apart or dissects your old army musket that is worth something, and God knows it is not the works! When we turn down an ambitious youth and plainly he sees no future partnership, no rise, no hope, can't you see that boy or young man headed for a business of his own? It does happen. It always has. You know the truth of it as well as I.

I once talked with one of our leading inventors who had heard this lecture, and he said to me: "Mr. Coleen, I believe all you say. No invention of mine would have been a success had I not studied out my failures."

The hardest problem in the business world for the man of natural ability is to believe in the fellow who comes slowly to the front. Another man who is usually regarded as of little consequence at the time is the man of ability, not as yet recognized, but who is a plunger. His bedrock principles are successful in business throughout the united kingdom, but it is because the plunger is a genius that he is a success. It is the rogue who follows in his wake that makes us distrust each, while the right one goes on with his science of business, as did Coleen, and forges majestically ahead.

There was a time when Coleen had lost a splendid advertising contract. It was an annual one for him at a

time when he needed it the most. The advertiser brought it to the office where Coleen read it. It was readable, yes; but it was the result of image-making phrases. It did not ring true, and Coleen who was editor, job printer and his own errand boy, denounced it. "Don't flag the people with a lie," he said, handing back the advertisement. Naturally he lost out; but so did the advertiser who insisted elsewhere on its publication.

That was John Coleen's business policy in everything he ever did. This was the gist of his lecture course as he traveled throughout the state, venturing into other states and making new discoveries wherever he went. Men did want to—know. They were eager to learn. Happily the campaigns had their social feature which enlivened them. There were no officers of commerce side-stepping the new activity. Indeed they saw the need of it. Doubtless I need say no more of this, as its fruition is evidenced today from coast to coast, not alone in one or two states; but, like a business of its own, the boost-for-home trade is fighting in and out of the trenches for home welfare and most of the warfare is strongly against the mail-order business. "Down with it!" is the slogan on every man's lips.

Winter passed, spring awakened once more with a yawn and smile as delightful as that of a waking child. It was then that Coleen thought of his home, that vacant-staring home which knew no footfall other than that of the caretaker. At times Coleen looked from his office up at his house, which could easily be seen back on its high terrace, the fashionable boulevard of Garthage. It was the only uninhabited house there.

One evening he was looking lonesomely over at the house, his heart as drab as a January sky and far more listless. He turned to Ruth busy with some papers. Sitting down by her side, he reached over and took her

hands from the keys, looked around him, then into her eyes to read there if she had learned the lesson he had tried in a thousand ways to teach her day by day, the interest he took in her, the love he dare not speak, which must show itself.

"Ruth," he spoke, "I wonder if you would like to go up there and make life worth living for each of us? Do not speak, dear; but let me talk at this time. All day I have watched that lonely house, no lonelier, dear, than your heart and mine. It is a beautiful place; but it can be made a little haven of refuge for us. I want you, Ruth. Love? Why, dear child, how could I ask you if I did not love you more than any woman in the whole wide world, especially when I know so many? Ruth! my—Ruth!"

I, who knew John Coleen, his whole life's story, would not invade that love shrine at a moment like this. I do not want you to listen to her reply. Let us see them, if we want to, as they look up at the house, the future abode of man and wife.

"But now that you have told us this," you say, "where is the romance of a man of his years whose wife is another type of child-wife, with wisdom beyond her years? Did he indeed, win Ruth 'the Dora' of a David Copperfield dream, after waiting so long?"

It was never my intention to let you read the love romance of John Coleen. Yet it has come naturally. Our love comes sometimes in youth; sometimes when hearts are older and truer; or it may miss us entirely. Yet the sweetest love he had ever known—and you now know his life's history, came with Ruth—indeed his child-wife.

After all it is but history. You may take the history of splendid triumphs, that of king and poet, philosophers and priests, the dreams of nuns and the ecstacies of

saints; but where does the heart that beats true to life find greater joy or peace in this world than John Coleen found in the love of Ruth who, as I said, reasoned beyond her years and knew the worth of a noble life she was to share throughout eternity.

The End.

JAN 25 1922

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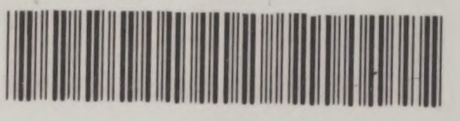

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